

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 1

“I’d like to buy a gun.”

“We sell guns; you’re in the right place. What kind of gun are you looking for? We have many to choose from: rifles, shotguns, revolvers and pistols.”

“Revolvers and pistols are handguns?”

“So you do know something about guns.”

“I’ve watched cowboy movies so I know what a six-shooter is. The older style guns might be great for a hobby, but I was thinking about something more relevant to the situation the country is in.”

“Well, I can see that you need an education. The AK-47 that Russia built about 100 million of, is an assault rifle. The M1 Garand and the M14 are American Main Battle Rifles. The Main Battle Rifles are the CETME, FN FAL, FAMAS and the German G3. The American assault rifle is the AR15/M16.”

“I’ve heard them called poodle shooters.”

“They do have some detractors. The problem is the gas system that causes the action to get dirty over time and fail to function.”

“I don’t believe I’d like that. The Garand was WW II, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, but it’s a fine action. The M14 that we went to in the 1950s was based on the Garand and mainly added a detachable magazine.”

“Do you carry those?”

“We have the less expensive models in stock and I can get you one of the more expensive models in about a week or two. The current civilian version is manufactured by several companies. We carry the rifles made by Springfield Armory, Inc., in Illinois. They have six models: Standard, Loaded, National Match, Super Match, M21 and M25. We don’t carry the M21 or the M25.”

“Can you show me the two least expensive models?”

“Here’s the Standard and here’s the Loaded.”

“They look the same.”

"Maybe, but looks can be deceiving. The Loaded has several match features including trigger, sights, medium weight air gauged barrel and so forth. The Standard will shoot just fine; however, the Loaded will shoot much better. Will you be match shooting?"

"No, why?"

"The National Match has more match features than the Loaded including an adjustable stock. The Super Match is something to behold and better than a National Match. If you change the stock on the Super Match to an adjustable stock, you end up with the M21, a sniper rifle."

"How much money are we talking?"

"Loaded, I can go \$1,500; Super Match, I can go \$2,800."

"Gee, I don't know, that's a lot for a rifle."

"The Loaded will shoot a 6" group at 600-meters and the Super will shoot a 3" group at the same range, with iron sights."

"I'll think about it for now, what can you show me in shotguns?"

"Single shot, pump or auto?"

"I think maybe pump."

"We have several variations on the Remington 870 and several variations on the Mossberg 500/590."

"Got anything with a sight like what's on the rifles?"

"Yes, in both brands, I'll lay out a couple. Here's an 870 and here's a 590A1."

"I like the look and feel of the Mossberg, what can you tell me about it?"

"Eight round magazine plus one in the chamber, Ghost Ring sights, metal trigger guard and safety, heavy barrel with cylinder bore."

"How much?"

"Five hundred."

"Let's discuss handguns."

"Pistol or revolver?"

“Pistol; with a reasonable capacity magazine.”

“Any idea what caliber you might be interested in?”

“I’ve shot a friend’s Colt .45, I liked that.”

“Model 1911?”

“The one the military used for 70 years.”

“Yep, the M1911. I don’t stock Colt’s, but I do stock Para Ordnance and Taurus. Let me get you the Para to look at, I don’t think you’ll want anything else.”

“Nice pistol, how much?”

“I can sell you the PX1445EB for \$850 and that’s a good price.”

“What about the Taurus?”

“Good gun, less expensive, call it \$600 plus tax. Here, take a look.”

“Do you carry Ruger?”

“Which model?”

“10/22.”

“How many do you need?”

“Only two. Here’s the deal, I’ll pay cash for whatever I buy and I need a 5% discount for cash. Before you say no, wait until I tell you what I want, ok?”

“This had better be good.”

“The M1As, I’ll take both; plus two of the Mossberg shotguns and two PT1911s and the two 10/22s.”

“Which both, the Standard and the Loaded? I can give you 5% off for cash on the ammo too. Are you sure? This is a very large transaction.”

“No, two Super Match. I’ll pay for the ammo on delivery. Wait, I forgot one.”

“What now?”

“Walther PPK in .380?”

“Two?”

“Of course.”

“Buying for the wife?”

“Would a married man be in a gun store spending thousands of dollars in cash?”

“Future bride?”

“You never know.”

“Why don’t you just buy her the same guns as you’re buying for yourself?”

“What if it didn’t work out and she divorced me? I don’t think I could stand to see all the expensive guns filing out the door.”

“On the other hand, if she had the same firearms as you have, she would feel she was your equal; just something to think about.”

“Do you have two of everything?”

“Well, it just so happens...”

I was always a sucker for a salesman’s pitch and the guns weren’t for a future wife. I didn’t get out of the store for hours. I had to fill out 4 4473s because there is only room on the form for 3 guns. Since the transaction included more than two handguns in a five day period, we had to list the handguns on the 3310.4. There were other things I wanted beyond the guns, like spare magazines, leather, cases and the ammo.

“You want what?”

“Eight thousand-rounds of Black Hills 175gr Match BTHP and 2,000-rounds of Black Hills 180gr Nosler AccuBond. I’ll take 2,000-rounds each of Speer Lawman 200gr and Gold Dot 200gr +P. Shotgun ammo, um, two cases of Brenneke Black Magic 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz slugs, four cases of Remington 15-pellet Express Magnum 00 buck and 40 bricks of Remington .22LR,  $\frac{1}{4}$  hollow point and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Hyper velocity and the other half solid point.”

“Did you just win the Lottery? Don’t remember seeing your face in the paper.”

“Well, friend, I was shining you on a bit when I came in because I wanted to see what you’d say. You must have said the right thing, too, don’t you agree? I am in fact single and got back from the sandbox a while back. I’m in the Iowa National Guard. Thing is, I had all this money saved up to pay cash for a new car, but with the price of gas \$3.25 a gallon; I’m keeping my old Jeep.”

“What is it, a Wrangler?”

“Nope, WW II surplus, a Willys MB, fixed up some. I basically added a top and rebuilt the drive train, replaced everything under the hood or had it rebuilt.”

“Is that it out front?”

“Yes.”

“Looks like a CJ.”

The original CJ was the MB.”

“The total on the firearms before tax comes to \$9,800, less your cash discount. What about magazines?”

“Each handgun should have a total of magazines. I’ll want USGI factory new 20-round magazines for the rifles, probably CMI. 25 each for the M1As and 5 each of the 25-round for the 10/22s.”

Before I walked out the door, I passed him 5 figures, in cash. He said the ammo would be in by the end of next week and he’d deliver it or I could pick it up. I told him to deliver it to the address on the 4473s, but to call first so I’d be sure to have the cash.

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Let me fill in the blank spots. My full name is William Tecumseh Sherman and it’s a family joke. I generally go by Will. Well think of it, they could have named me William Tiberius Sherman. I was born in 1983, am 25 years old and single. I was raised on a farm right near the Iowa-Missouri border. The land was pretty much rolling hills and hard to farm.

I had joined the Iowa National Guard and was sent to the extended boot camp. I hung out for a while and eventually, I got orders for the sandbox. I had joined the Guard to avoid that, Mom had ovarian cancer and I just wanted to be around. She passed before I left, so I did get to attend her funeral. My father, who was only 50, had a time bomb ticking in his chest aka an arrhythmia. The doc called it supraventricular tachycardia and said it could be far worse.

Dad said not to worry about him; he’d be fine and my sister Jill could check in on him from time to time. If her name was Jill, why was mine that family joke? I got over there before the President decided to surge the troops, so we were very busy dodging IEDs and EFPs. My squad leader was Sgt. Derek Ott from Huxley. His wife and kids had moved to Arkansas, just before he left, and he would be moving there when we got back. I served from Oct05 to Oct06 and we came home, only short one soldier, Danny Sesker, from Ogden.

When we arrived back at Camp Dodge, they had quite the celebration and I looked everywhere expecting to see Dad and Jill. They simply weren't there. Before the reverie became pronounced, the First Shirt pulled me aside.

"Your father and sister won't be here, Will, there's been an accident."

"What kind of accident?"

"An auto accident. According to the Iowa Highway Patrol, your father lost control. Your sister was airlifted to Iowa Methodist Hospital, is in a coma, and is in intensive care but is expected to live. Your father wasn't so fortunate, he didn't make it. The Captain said to fill you in and we'll provide transport to the hospital. Get your gear around and a driver will be out front."

I didn't hurry because hurrying wouldn't change anything. I couldn't believe Dad was dead and sis in a coma. I got my duffle and other gear and climbed in the Hummer. It was about 40 minutes to the hospital and I thanked the driver and headed to intensive care lugging my gear.

"I'm William Sherman; I understand that my sister Jill was brought in by air ambulance."

"Yes Mr. Sherman, they transported her and your father. Do you know his condition?"

"I was told he died."

"I'm very sorry for your loss. We had quite a time tracking you down, have duty this weekend?"

"No, I just got back from Iraq. I hadn't seen Dad or sis in 6 months."

"That explains the uniform and all the gear. You can put it over there and we'll keep an eye on it for you. Then, you can come with me and I'll show you your sister. You're allowed to visit briefly once an hour but can't talk with her until she is moved to critical care."

I checked on Jill and aside from some light bandages, she didn't look much the worse for wear. I went looking for a payphone to call my uncle John.

"Uncle John, this is Will."

"Welcome home, Will. Did you get down here okay?"

"I'm at Iowa Methodist in Des Moines. On the way up, Dad and Jill had an auto accident. I'm sorry, but Dad is dead and Jill is in intensive care in a coma."

“We’ll come of course, is there anything else we can do?”

“Ask Jack to drive my Jeep up so I have a way to get around. I’d like it if you could make funeral arrangements for Dad using the same funeral home that handled Mom’s funeral.”

“Are you ok Will?”

“No, I’m not ok Uncle John, but I can’t change what happened. I’ll get a room at a nearby motel and change into civvies. How long do you think it will take you to get here?”

“You’d better give us two hours. Where’s the key for the Jeep?”

“Jack knows where the hidden key holder is Uncle John.”

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I had to stay up until they arrived so I got the motel room, showered, changed into jeans and a shirt and got something to eat at the nearby Burger King. I returned to the hospital and looked in on Jill.

“She’s starting to come to, Mr. Sherman. They’re in checking on her now. I see you got out of your uniform, but you really look tired.”

“I’m exhausted. We rode in the back of a truck most of the day from Camp McCoy. I contacted Dad’s brother John and he should be here in about 30 minutes. Do you have all the information you need? Dad had health insurance on himself and Jill.”

“They brought her purse, thank you. Your Dad went first class with the best Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan offered. I’d expect most, if not all, of the costs will be covered.”

I was also covered on the policy because Dad had a lawyer form a corporation to own the farm and the health insurance was an employee benefit. We’d never talked about what would happen if he died, but I was sure that the same lawyer made out a will. Both Jill and I were carried as employees; she was the bookkeeper/accountant and I was Assistant Farm Manager. I had an Agriculture degree from ISU. The farm was near the border in Decatur County and Jill also worked for a store in Bethany, Missouri.

“Did you get a room?”

“At the motel, room 103.”

“How’s Jill?”

“Coming out of the coma, is Jack here?”

“Give him a few minutes, he was right behind us but had to find a different parking spot.”

“Mr. Sherman?”

Uncle John and I both answered, “Yes?”

“And you are?”

“I’m her Uncle and the brother of her father.”

“They’re transferring her to critical care, it should take about 30 minutes and then you can see her. Her father is...”

“I called the mortuary and they’ll be here in the morning to pick him up.”

“If you’ll give the information to Admitting, they’ll make arrangements.”

“Hey Jack, thanks for driving my Jeep up.”

“I found the hidden key; do you have yours with you?”

“They’re at the house as far as I know. Dad fired it up periodically to recharge the battery. He probably even drove it occasionally to keep the lubrication moved around.”

“Will, this may be premature, but there are a couple of things I think you should know.”

“What’s that Uncle John?”

“When your father and mother were just getting started out and they had a large mortgage, he took out life insurance to cover the mortgage and then some. Eventually he paid the farm off, but he never dropped the coverage. It’s payable to Jill and you. Second, his will provides that Jill and you each inherit 50% of the remaining corporation stock, so you will jointly own the farm. What you may not know is that he made a gift to each of you each year up to the limit, in corporate stock. You may not owe any inheritance taxes. You know him, he always paid cash and you won’t have many expenses to cover. He even had funeral insurance, so that’s covered. If you have any questions about his wishes, I can probably answer your questions.”

“Thanks, let’s go see Jill.”

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“Hey you.”

“Hey yourself. Aren’t you the picture? What happened?”



“All I can remember is Dad saying he was dizzy and starting to swerve. Can’t remember anything after that, sorry Will.”

“Did they tell you what your condition is?”

“I have a concussion, several sprains and this laceration on my forehead. I had my seatbelt on and the car had the airbags, front and sides.”

“You get better Jill. I need some sleep and I’ll be here first thing in the morning.”

We walked back to the motel and Jack would bunk with me while Uncle John and Aunt Shirley got their own room. John came over to visit for a few minutes.

“We checked on your Dad’s car, Will. It’s totaled. He bought a new pickup, you know.”

“What did he get?”

“He bought a 6-passenger diesel 4WD with dual rear tires and the long bed.”

“What kind?”

“Ford, F-550 Super Duty with a lot of bells and whistles. He shelled out over 60 grand and it’s in the name of the corporation.”

“That’s just about the opposite of my Jeep.”

“He said it was the last pickup he intended to buy. Prophetic, I guess.”

“What’s the situation on the farm?”

“All the crops are in and sold. All the livestock has been taken to market. There’s a beef and two hogs that you’ll have to pick up at the locker plant. You only have one cow wet and the others are dry. The sows have been bred, you’ll have litters soon enough. You father finished up fall plowing so all you’ll have to do come spring is disk and drag. I can tell you which crops were planted in which fields so you can rotate the beans and corn.”

“Ok, we’ll talk more tomorrow; I’ve got to get some sleep.”

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Jill was out of the hospital in time for the funeral. Dad had 4 plots and we put him next to Mom under where his name was on the headstone. I was surprised at the turnout because this area is so rural. Of course, people were there from Jill’s job, a couple of my buddies from the Guard showed up, and an after the funeral reception was set up at a church in Bethany.

I had a chance to check out Dad's new pickup and he'd gone all out. Some things, however, were the factory standard rather than an option, like the radio. He did have a business radio mounted in the pickup that could call the house. He had radios in his car that I retrieved from the junkyard and dropped it off at the dealer in Bethany to have checked out. Jill also had one in her car and I had one in my Jeep.

We all had technician's licenses for amateur radio and our vehicles also sported amateur radios and CBs. Dad had gone with Yaesu brand even though it cost more. His main radio was the Yaesu FT DX 9000MP and he also had a FT 7800R. He'd had an elevating tower installed with a 10 band vertical on top and a set of beams for most of the bands. His base station could generate 400-watts but didn't cover 2-meters. The 7800 cover 2-meters and 73cm. Conversely, the radios in our vehicles were all band, the model FT 897D.

Dad was a successful farmer as you can tell. He kept enough of the grain he produced to feed the livestock and sold the excess. He made his own livestock feed using the corn, soybeans, oats and supplements. He bought a still to produce ethanol, just in case and also had a biodiesel converter and an oil press. We had made trial runs on the equipment, once. It seemed to work fine. He took the few gallons of alcohol he produced and stored it in a used oak barrel from one of the distilleries. It should be about 4 years old now.

Jill was back to work in about 3 weeks and I moved back into my room and did the chores. We talked about Iraq, the war, my staying in the Guard and she brought me up to speed about the year I was gone. She was beating herself up because she said she knew that Dad had fainting spells but was too proud to admit it. She didn't want to start a fight by insisting she drive.

The estate settled quickly and the insurance paid off. I took the money I'd saved up to buy a car together with some of the insurance money and scratched an itch. That itch was the firearms I mentioned at the beginning. I was actually buying for myself and Jill, but that salesman didn't need to know that. I walked in the store with a list in my head and played dumb.

I'd seen both the Accuracy International rifle, the Barrett Mike 107 and a few SEALs with Mk-15s. The Mk-15 is made by McMillan and called the Tac-50. If I were to buy a .50-caliber rifle, I'd probably go with the Mk-15 for several reasons. First, it was the least expensive of the three. Second, it came as a set that included an extra magazine, the scope and a few other extras. Third, I could afford one if I wanted one, including the ammo. Finally, it was the only one with guaranteed 0.5MOA accuracy.

"Is this Will Sherman?"

"Yes."

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 2

“Your ammo order is in, sorry it took so long. Do you want us to deliver it or will you pick it up?”

“I’ll pick it up, there’s one more rifle I’d like to order. Will you still give me 5% off for cash?”

“That depends on the size of the transaction.”

“Order the rifle now and call me when it comes in. I come up then and pick up the rifle and ammo. Now, here’s what I want: a McMillan Tac-50 package with the Night Force NXS 12-42x56 Mil Dot scope, eight extra magazines and any parts kits they sell. The color will be dark earth.”

“My God, that’s going to run you close to twenty grand.”

“Less 5% for cash, right?”

“Right. Did you ever shoot a McMillan?”

“I haven’t but I’ve been with snipers using the Mike 107, the AW 50 and the Mk 15.”

“It going to take a while to get it in and I’d like to have 50% down. Why don’t you come up and get the ammo and I’ll order the rifle when I get your down payment?”

“That’s a long trip and gas is expensive, can you make it worth my while?”

“Hang on a second; I’m looking at my catalog. How about I pay for one case of the ammo?”

“Deal, see you in a couple of hours.”

I had to go to the bank and pull out a bundle of cash in addition to the cash I already was holding to pay for the ammo. He said close to 20 grand, so I’d give him ten grand down, plus pay for the ammo I was picking up. I was beginning to wish that I didn’t itch so badly.

“Didn’t bring your Jeep?”

“It wouldn’t hold everything, so I bought the farm truck.”

“You didn’t say what you wanted for ammo.”

“Hornady 750gr A-MAX. Nineteen cases on me and one case on you. I have the money, go ahead and start loading. Will ten thousand be a large enough deposit on the Rifle?”

“I’ll have to order the ammo. It’s made in Grand Island, Nebraska so it won’t take long to come in. Ten thousand down will do nicely. The bill for your ammo is \$19,350.”

I started counting out the Ben Franklins. I’m sure he was going to take a cruise in the Caribbean with the money he made off me.

“How long on the Tac-50?”

“Hang on and I’ll call.”

“Three days, four if you want the scope mounted and sighted in.”

“I can wait an extra day.”

“That’s what I told them, now is there anything else I can do for you today?”

“Where can I get ammo cans and desiccants?”

“I can get them wholesale for you and I’ll be cheaper than any surplus store. You want enough cans to store all of the ammo in your truck?”

“Enough for 5,200 rounds.”

“I’ll let you have them for my cost and the shipping.”

“Will they be in when the rifle is here?”

“They’ll be here before the rifle arrives.”

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It was a dreary Christmas with both Mom and Dad gone. Jill spent Christmas with her new boyfriend at his parent’s home in Bethany. I had a turkey TV dinner. I had time to reflect on something Derek had told me about his father. His father, a life member of the NRA for over 40 years, was a bit of a gun nut and a survivalist. His hobby was Patriot Fiction and most of his stories were posted on Frugal Squirrel’s. I had time to kill and began reading his stories in the order he’d written them.

Can’t say which story I liked best, some were better than others, and some worse. The man was a dedicated fan of the M1A rifle. He also despised the M16, because of the dirty gas system and its limited power. They aren’t that bad, if you keep them clean. Ask me how many Bushmaster A3s I bought; or, Colt HBARs. The designated marksman always used a .30-caliber rifle. I saw a fair number of M21s in Iraq, but they all had scopes mounted.

Anyway, between Christmas and New Year's, I had managed to read through Mountain Man. That was a story he wrote with a great deal of input from Rock River, I believe. I made the trip to pick up my Tac-50, the ammo and the ammo cans and parted with even more money. However, I had all I intended to buy for now.

When I tried to give Jill her set of firearms, she looked at me like I was crazy and we had words. Now, come on, Dad had taught us both to shoot. With her small hands, the P-14 didn't really fit and I picked up a Taurus for her and an 870 Express combo. She did take a .22 so I replaced the one she took.

One of those stories caught my eye and gave me an idea. This is hilly country with more than a few caves. I didn't know of any caves on the farm, but the hills intrigued me. A short way behind the house was a fairly tall hill that was probably 10' higher than the peak of the roof. The 2½-story house was probably built in the 1920s, but I'd be guessing. The basement was made out of limestone blocks mortared together. There was a limestone cliff on the farm that was probably the source of those blocks.

I got a roll of shelf paper and did my best to design a better storm shelter than we had. But, I'm a farmer, not an architect and my best effort was lame. I fooled around with it for a while but finally gave up. The sows farrowed and I was busy for a while taking care of over 300 newborn pigs.

Eventually, before I could get into the fields, I contacted another member of the Guard who was a stone mason and we got together to discuss what I wanted. He said my basic plan was okay, with a few changes. Did I want him to build it?

"I hadn't given it any thought, Roy. What would be involved if you built it?"

"First off, I'd have to come down and see about the limestone you have. If you have enough, we'd have to mine it and move it close to the location where you want the storm shelter. Then, you'd have to get an excavation contractor to come in and remove all the soil. Are you sure you want it connected to the back wall of your basement by a tunnel?"

"Absolutely. Even if we can't make it to the shelter, the basement will afford us some protection."

"Poured concrete would probably be much cheaper."

"I'll have to tell you Roy, I don't really care what it's built from as long as it's in the center of that hill and below basement level."

"Want me to work up a proposal?"

"When could you do it?"

“During my two-week summer vacation. How big do you want it?”

“About 30 by 50.”

“You’ll have two rows of posts supporting the overhead.”

“Whatever. Can you do it?”

“Can you afford it?”

“That depends on how much it costs.”

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“It will take four loads of concrete. My boss said he would lend me the forms. I do have a few questions, however. What about water and drainage?”

“The septic tank is well below the house, we can tie in there. The well has a solar powered pump and we can install a tank above the shelter and still be well below ground level. We’ll need two tanks, one for water and a second for diesel fuel. I have one change I want, a room off the tunnel to hold a diesel generator.”

“What about an air intake?”

“I’ll have the equipment on hand before you build the storm shelter. It will be a positive pressure setup and the air intake will bring in more air than the volume of the shelter.”

I’ll work by the hour for \$10 an hour and my helpers will get \$7.50 per hour.”

“Can you arrange everything?”

“Turnkey project?”

“Well, I’ll either be planting, cultivating, taking care of livestock or be in a state of collapse. Turnkey would be better, but I’ll pay for the materials and subcontractors as we go.”

“Will you get the tanks?”

“I’ll do that and I’ll have more flexibility that way.”

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I contacted Utah shelter systems and discussed the AV-150 and the AV-300. I ordered the 300 and two filters (one spare). I also ordered two 3-bar blast valves for the generator intake and exhaust plus two more for air to cool the generator. I planned on some

kind of inline hepa filters to keep radiation out of the generator room. Finally, I ordered the Swiss PT Armored Door. I mailed off a check for  $\frac{2}{3}$  the total of my order. I was told the items would be delivered to my door. I located a Cummins dealer and bought a Cummins DGCB extended stack single phase generator and a multi range ATS. My next call was to Texas where I ordered a 40,000-gallon fiberglass truck stop diesel tank. My final call was to a dealer in Bethany who said he'd get in a 5,000-gallon water tank for me.

As you can tell, my machine shed was getting filled up. We birthed a small herd of calves and I got set to take up milking 30 cows. Thank God for Surge. Dad, and now I, raised shorthorn cattle, not the Holsteins normally found on dairy farms. Therefore, we produced less milk but got better market beef. We have 10 sows and 30 cows, one of whom was ready to dry up. Our chicken flock was small, probably 12 layers. Springtime was when we bought the pullets. I didn't much care for plucking chickens. None the less, we bought around 100 every year and sometimes butchered the old hens to use as stewing/baking hens. It was 100 in and 100 out, but not always the same 100. Jill usually gathered the eggs and washed them when she got home at night.

We never bought roosters because roosters caused bloody eggs and you can't sell or eat bloody eggs. The hens don't seem to know the difference. So, during the summer we produced lots of eggs and fattened hogs and beef. Of course we bred the sows again because they can handle two litters a year, only we kept five of the gilts to increase the herd. I planned to use all of the grain we produced right here on the farm.

Everything was sitting there in the machine shed when the excavation contractor showed up. I showed him the basement wall and the hill and told him to have fun. I not sure that Roy told him he'd be moving so much overburden. From the top of the hill to where we wanted the shelter slab was close to 50 feet, straight down. He was very clever, starting about mid-level of the hill and taking off the first 25' then working his way down. He used a bucket crane to remove the piled up soil and a front end loader to pile it. I paid him when he finished up.

The next thing that happened was a couple of flatbeds showed up with the forms which were unloaded and stacked. Two weeks later, Roy and his three men showed up and began to cut in the drain line and assemble the forms. (Our septic tank was a large 3,000-gallon affair and I added bacteria once a month.) Once the drain line was in and the foundation formed up, they got a load of concrete and poured the footings. He and I had worked out detailed plans showing where every water, sewer and electrical line went. While they waited for the footing to cure, they installed all of those. Next, they formed the walls, had them poured and I paid for more loads of concrete.

While one of them cut a hole in the basement wall, the other three formed up the over-heads. We installed anything in the shelter that would be too big to pass through the tunnel, which was only the generator. Roy subcontracted having the concrete sealed. I got a lifetime warranty and wondered, "Whose lifetime?"

I got busier than a one armed paper hanger in a hurricane. I had to find a hired hand and I put an ad in the paper. I had one application, a 19-year-old fella from rural Missouri. He seemed to know his crops and livestock so I took him on trial. Jim was from rural Bethany and his last name, not that it matters, was Ross. He could drive a tractor, use a milking machine, didn't mind collecting eggs and proved to be a good hand.

"What's that you're building?"

"I'm putting in a new storm shelter."

"All the way under the hill? What kind of storm are you hiding from?"

"Once it's filled back in and compacted, just about any kind of storm that comes our way."

"What are the tanks for?"

"The big one is diesel and the small one is water."

"I wouldn't mind seeing it when it's done, if it's okay."

"I don't see why not, you know about it now. Do me a favor, though; don't mention it to anyone else."

"It's a secret?"

"More like it's nobody's business."

"Gottcha. I have to leave early on Friday; my sister Karen will be home from college. Would that be ok?"

"She just graduate?"

"Yes, she went to Northwestern Missouri State University and got a Master's degree in History. She plans to teach."

"Married or single?"

"Single, why?"

"Just curious. I'm 26 and she would be what, 24?"

"That's right, 24."

"It's time to start milking. I'll herd the cattle in and you get them in their stalls."



I had a few more things that I wanted to do. An example was to move the 25ft<sup>3</sup> freezer from the basement to the shelter. Another was to buy some radiation equipment that Derek's dad had talked about from that place in Texas. Yet another was to put in a permanent firing range, up against one of the many hills. I'd like 500-yards if I could do it. The shelter was bare bones and I planned to put in a stove, refrigerator, possibly a microwave and of course the plumbing fixtures and assorted cabinets. I wanted to move the radio equipment down there too and extend the cables.

"Will, it's done except for back filling it. What now?"

"I'll use my tractor and blade to refill it part way and compact the soil. Next, I'll install the tanks and plumb them in. Finally, I'll finish filling and compacting and will seed it over."

"What about the tanks?"

"The water tank will fill itself. I'll have to get the dealer to deliver more diesel as I can afford it."

I lied, but he didn't need to know that. He already knew too much as far as I was concerned. Roy knew about the blast door entrance to the shelter, but the basement tunnel entrance was left open with the block they removed all nicely stacked in the basement. It was something that TOM had mention in one of his stories, *Just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean that they aren't out to get you*. In another of his stories, he had talked about a hidden gun room behind a bar.

How about a hidden shelter behind a basement wall? It might take a little engineering, but before I was through, those blocks, or the front part of them, would be used to conceal a door opening into the tunnel. If I could manage it, I'd much prefer to use the whole blocks because of the radiation protection factor they would provide. The question was, "How do you support that much weight and allow it to swivel easily?"

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Oh, and that small insurance policy Dad had? Well, it wasn't so small. Even before I finished the building project, I invested some of it in gold and silver. I got in when gold was around \$525 and silver around \$10. I also bought \$6,000 face value in junk silver, two bags each of dimes, quarters and halves. I was obviously betting heavily on my prediction of what was coming. I envisioned the economy going into the toilet, gold and silver rising and, if we weren't careful, WW III. I'll admit that I missed guessing about \$5 gasoline and \$6 diesel.

I got Jim to help me back fill over the shelter, after he got the grand tour. He spent a whole day in that hole compacting the soil, wetting it down and compacting it more. The next day, after we milked and gathered eggs, we set the water tank in and hooked it up. The day after, we used the loader to set the fuel tank in the hole. As it was, the tank was almost too heavy to lift and I had to add weight to the back of the tractor. We made the

finally connections and I told Jim that I'd do the farm work and he could finish backfilling and compacting the hole.

I did get the tank filled and it cost me \$75,000 for the diesel and almost \$1,600 for the 20 gallons of PRI-D I bought. Buying it in the 6-gallon lots hadn't been economic so I contacted the company that made it, Power Research Inc. (PRI) and discussed buying a drum. Best they'd do was in the area of \$60 a gallon, plus shipping. Hell, I have two rifles that cost nearly that much and one that cost way more than that, so why not? I bought PRI-G and PRI-D, going for broke.

I had this yea-so-long stick that would allow me to stick the diesel tank and come within a couple of hundred gallons of what it actually contained. As the price of diesel and gasoline continued to rise, I kept it topped off, 2,000-gallons at a whack. I also kept the 500-gallon farm tank of gasoline topped off and treated with PRI-G, which I bought in a 6-gallon lot.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July of 2007, I was invited to Jim's family picnic. I put on my best pair of Wrangler's, the ones with the creases, and a nice western cut shirt. I buffed up my Tony Lama's and added my Stetson. Not the Calvary one, the other one. I'm about 5'10, 150-pounds and clean up pretty good. I drove my Jeep and it took me a while to find their farm, even with the directions Jim had given me.

"Help you?"

"Is this the Ross place?"

"Why yes."

"I'm Will Sherman, Jim invited me."

"Oh hi Will, I'm Karen."

The hell you say. Before me stood one of the best looking women I'd seen in a very long time – about 5'6, maybe 105-110 and a nice but not outlandish figure. Her hair flowed all the way down to the middle of her back and had such a shine. I couldn't see a hint of makeup, so either it was skillfully applied or wasn't there to see. I'm afraid I was tongue tied for a moment.

"Uh, hi Karen, nice to meet you."

"Care to come in the house and meet our parents?"

Already? "Sure, lead the way."

"Jim, maybe you'd better make the introductions."

“Dad, this is my boss, Will Sherman. Will, my father Jim Ross. Mom, Will Sherman, Will my mother Susan.”

“You farm up on the other side of the border?”

“Right up to it actually; the section just north of the road about 2 miles east of I-35.”

“That must be a real roller coaster ride working them thar hills.”

“Yes sir, it’s a challenge.”

“Jim here says you’re in the Guard?”

“Yes sir, I got back last October from a one year tour.”

“My name is Jim, not sir. Call me Jimbo if that makes it easier having two Jim’s around. High School nickname I sometimes use.”

“Yes sir.”

“I see you wearing western dress, are you into Single Action Shooting?”

“I have several firearms but no revolvers or lever action carbines. As far as the clothes go, it’s just my idea of casual, being a farm boy.”

“We have quite a few of the single action revolvers and lever action rifles. Some of them are new in the box that I bought up quickly when Winchester dropped the lever actions. I also have some new Colts I got a deal on many years ago. Both Karen and Jim have western rigs and scabbards for their carbines when they ride.”

“That’s one thing my father wasn’t into, horses. You should see this Gawd-awful pickup he bought a few months before he was killed in the auto accident. It’s a Ford F-550 diesel with everything but fancy electronics.”

“I’m sorry for your loss, was that recent?”

“The day I got back to Iowa from Iraq.”

“On the way to greet you, I suppose?”

“Exactly. My sister Jill was in a coma briefly but miraculously escaped serious injury. She works here in Bethany at the Hy-Vee.”

“Do you do most of your shopping here in Missouri?”

“Yes and no. I bought some firearms recently, but that was in Des Moines. Typical grocery shopping, we do at Hy-Vee, here in town. I’ve intended to join Costco Wholesale in West Des Moines for some time, but haven’t gotten around to it just yet.”

“Jim said he helped you on your storm shelter.”

“Really? What else did he say about my storm shelter?”

“Just that he spent quite some time compacting earth. He got a kick out of it because as he added dirt and compacted it, he sort of worked his way to the top of whatever hill you built it in. That must be quite the storm shelter.”

“It is, actually, it’s top of the line.”

“Time to start the coals; would you care for something to drink? A beer or a Coke?”

“I’ll take a Coke, please.”

I could see Susan and Karen bring out things to the large picnic table in the backyard. I also noticed they were carrying on a hushed conversation. I occasionally snuck a peek at Karen and she was sneaking peeks of me because our eyes met a couple of times. Jimbo cooked burgers and hot dogs on the grill and we sat down to eat. Happenstance or whatever put Karen directly across from me.

“I understand from Jim that you going to be teaching history.”

“That’s correct, High School History, right here in Bethany.”

”Is History an interesting subject?”

“I believe so. There was a man named George Santayana who said, *those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.*”

“A philosopher?”

“George Santayana, who died in 1952, was a philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist. A lifelong Spanish citizen, Santayana was raised and educated in the United States, wrote in English and is generally considered an American man of letters, although, of his nearly 89 years, he spent only 39 in the US. He is perhaps best known as an aphorist, and for the oft-misquoted remark, *Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it*, from Reason in Common Sense, the first volume of his The Life of Reason.”

“An aphorist?”

### Threatcon Delta – Chapter 3

“It’s a way of phrasing something in a memorable way. Let me give you another example, *Life is short, art is long, opportunity fugitive, experimenting dangerous, reasoning difficult: it is necessary not only to do oneself what is right, but also to be seconded by the patient, by those who attend him, by external circumstances.*”

“You lost me on one of the turns.”

“It was just an example that I spent time memorizing. Did you go to college?”

“I graduated from Iowa State with a major in Animal Science. After I graduated, I came back to the farm to help out. I also joined the Iowa National Guard, assuming that if the world was becoming more dangerous, a man ought to know a little bit about soldiering. I learned a little more than I planned on, though.”

“What’s this about you building a storm shelter?”

“What it’s about is your brother talking out of turn. I gave him the tour and he helped me finish it up. I asked him to do me a favor, though and not mention it to anyone else.”

“He was just hyped up about filling up the hole.”

“Since your whole family knows about it, would you like to see it? Your mom and dad would be welcome too.”

“Maybe sometime, we’ll see.”

In my limited experience that generally meant that she’d wait and see if she got a better offer. I suppose she could have just been coy (modest). Damn, was she good looking! And, there was no way she didn’t know it. Single Action Shooting? It might create an inroad.

◦

“How are we today?”

“I don’t know about you, but I’m here to buy a gun.”

“You don’t say, what did you have in mind?”

“Do the numbers P1840, P1850 and P1870 mean anything to you?”

“You said you weren’t into Single Action Shooting. You may recall that I told you I don’t sell Colts.”

“Don’t sell them or can’t get them.”

“I have some perfectly good Ruger’s, Beretta’s and Taurus SAA, for much less money.”

“You didn’t answer my question.”

“I can get them, but...”

“Stop before you say something we’ll both regret. I want one each of those three revolvers. If you can locate a new in the box Winchester rifle Model 94 Original Legacy 24" round barrel in .45 Colt I pay you a fair price.”

“I might get lucky on that, but no promises.”

“What about the Colts?”

“Here, start filling out the 4473 and I’ll have them in 2 days. They’ll run you \$1,100 each, no cash discount.”

“I’ll need ammo.”

“Cowboy?”

“No.”

“Your best bet would be to get new 2005 Ruger Vaqueros built on the Blackhawk frame since they’ll handle full power loads.”

“The Colts won’t handle full power loads?”

“That depends on the load. Buffalo Bore loads some hot .45 Colt loads that work well in the Winchester and the original Vaqueros.”

“Safer?”

“Absolutely and they have that transfer bar safety. Buffalo Bore tested the hot loads in a 5½” original Vaquero. The Vaqueros come in 4<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>”, 5½” and 7½” barrels and are much less expensive.”

“Do you sell Buffalo Bore?”

“I can get it. It’s expensive ammo.”

“And in consideration of my paying full price on the guns and being your best customer, you plan to give me a really good discount?”

"If I have to, say 5%?"

"Say 10%?"

"Split the difference?"

"Done. I want ten cases of the of the Buffalo Bore ammo. Maybe I'd better get one case of cowboy ammo, just in case."

"That is a 500 round case and much, much cheaper, maybe 85 cents a round."

"I'll pay for everything except the Winchester."

"I don't see your Jeep."

"I'm driving the big truck today. I'm going to West Des Moines to Costco and fill up the back of the truck and the trailer I'm pulling."

"I wasn't sure, but you just gave yourself away."

"What do you mean?"

"You're one of those survivalist crackpots."

"Not actually, but I know some. I'll admit that I have given more thought to being prepared since I got back from Iraq."

"Got the bomb shelter, generator, a jillion gallons of fuel, two tons of food and an armory to die for, right?"

"Let me set you straight, since you ask. I originally bought the duplicate set of firearms for my sister Jill. All she would take was the 10/22 so I came back and bought a replacement for the 10/22. Are you following me?"

"Well, so far."

"To quote Paul Harvey, *Page 3*. I met a young lady on the fourth of July who is drop dead gorgeous and the sister of my hired hand. She is into Single Action Shooting and I just thought..."

"Say no more, I understand now. How big is your shelter?"

"Fifteen hundred square feet, but it's not equipped yet."

"What's that going to take?"

“I need a stove, refrigerator, microwave, plumbing fixtures, beds, lighting, furniture and food.”

“That means you have the shelter, a blast door, an air system and a generator with fuel.”

“Takes one to know one?”

“You’re smarter than you look. Yeah, me too. Got into it over that Y2K thing and just kept going. Your best bet on LTS food is either the Mormons or the Mormons. I was referring to some of the Church related stores and places like Walton Feed in Idaho. You might want to consider Mountain House from Emergency Essentials or Nitro-Pak. Meanwhile, shop Costco and load up on things like coffee, toilet paper and large packages of the food you eat. The rule in this business is, buy what you eat and eat what you buy. I’ll give you as good a price on this stuff as I can, all things considered. Got any radiation equipment?”

“I bought the package.”

“Go back and buy a CD V-717 and a CD V-700. You might want to get extra CD V-742s; it sounds like you have room for 15 people. Above all else, you need to think ahead. There is a drought in Australia; does that mean anything to you?”

“Should it?”

“Wheat shortage. In this country we’re planting extra corn for ethanol and that bubble is going to burst real quickly. Think of all the things they make from corn. Buy large quantities of things you regularly consume that are imported; for example, canned tuna and rice and coffee.”

“One of my favorite authors keeps harping on beans and rice.”

“TOM? Beans, rice and corn are the staples in the Mexican diet. He’s a little crazy, but he’s more right than wrong. Give me five thousand for now and we settle up when I get everything in. I may need a week on some of the stuff.”

I had a wad in my right front pocket that was exactly \$5,000 and gave it to him and let him count it. There was an identical wad in my left front pocket and the same amount in my wallet. I intended to get as much as I could in one trip to Des Moines. I started at an appliance store and got the stove, microwave and refrigerator on sale. Home Depot supplied lighting and plumbing fixtures (sinks, stool and shower). A furniture store with a going out of business sale sign provided beds and mattresses. Staples in Altoona had 8’ folding tables and padded folding chairs.

Do I have to describe Costco? I joined in the name of the corporation and got one of those flat trolleys they have. I started with 10 50-pound bags of Jasmine rice, paid for it



and put it in the truck. I returned and got 12 of those trays of Folgers coffee. There was room on the trolley, so I added Kirkland canned beef, canned chicken and 6oz cans of tuna. I checked out again, unloaded, and returned. I got flour, sugar, Crisco and vegetable oil, filling the trolley again. Next pass was pancake mix, brownie and muffin mixes, and an assortment of spices that I knew we used. On the way to the checkout, I spotted the beans – next trip.

I got 10 bags of pinto beans and didn't see any other kind. I realized that I was beginning to attract attention of some of the employees. I topped that trolley with paper towels and checked out. An employee came up to me as I was loading the truck and offered to take my trolley. I told him my truck wasn't full so I had a way to go. When I went back in, the guy waved me through, again.

"Excuse me; are you shopping for a business?"

"The tag said manager.

"I am, for my corporate kitchen, plus a little for myself. Am I exceeding a limit or something?"

"The only limited purchases are marked as such. For example, cigarette purchases are limited."

"I don't smoke."

"It was just an example."

"Is toilet paper limited?"

"To the stock available on the shelf."

"Butter? Hams? Anything?"

"As I told you, if it's limited, the limit is posted."

"Thank you, cook will be so happy."

Yeah right. I had to do the toilet paper three times because it was very bulky and they had to keep restocking the shelf. When they stopped restocking, I made a slow pass through the aisles picking up things I'd overlooked. The only difference was I was using a regular cart now. A little here, a little there, half a cart full of hams and half full of butter. I picked up some of everything I could remember mom having in her pantry. About the only thing that I got that we grew was potatoes. I got one bag of those red potatoes so I could boil them and pan fry them in butter, I loved them fixed that way.

Where was Jill? I haven't seen much of her lately. Her boyfriend got an apartment and what with the rising price of gas, she claimed, she couldn't make the commute. Her business, I don't care. I was bone tired when I got home and only handled the things I had to do something with, the butter and the hams (not canned). Fortunately the refrigerator was at the back of the trailer and I moved it to the basement and plugged it in. I filled it with hams and butter and went to bed.

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The next morning, I called a plumber and an electrician and explained what I needed. The electrician could be out later in the day and the plumber the following day. I took my lantern into the shelter and used a piece of chalk and a tape measure to lay out interior walls. There would be two bunk rooms 10' deep by 15' wide and two bedrooms 10'x10', so I'd need framing, sheet rock, insulation, pre-hung doors. The bath was on the opposite wall, in the corner and it was a ¾ bath with sink, stool and shower; more framing, insulation and a pre-hung door. Next to it was a small room intended to be the armory. No insulation but a good steel door with a good lock. Next was the kitchen against the wall and a day room of sorts in the center. It would have 2 8' tables and the folding chairs. In the far right corner I would put the radio shack. Next to the radio shack table would be a grounded metal cabinet in case of HEMP or EMP.

"Are you down here Will?"

"Jim? Sorry, I was busy doing some planning. Could you get the cows in and milk them this morning?"

"No problem. Karen really thinks you are something special."

"What did she say? Tell me exactly."

"You too? My God, it's the Montague's and the Capulet's."

"Yeah, but what a lousy ending."

"What are all the marks?"

"Two bunk rooms, one male and one female plus two bedrooms large enough for a queen size bed but not much else."

"What's the capacity of this shelter?"

"Easily fifteen. That would include me, your family, Jill and her boyfriend and probably his family."

"How are you going to stock it?"

"I spent the day in Des Moines and dropped a wad of cash. The trailer and the truck are packed. I have an electrician coming this afternoon and a plumber tomorrow. If you can handle the chores, I'll try to get this sorted out and put together. I need some shelving, supplies from a lumberyard and maybe a carpenter to help me out."

"You want to keep this sort of quiet, right? Call my dad; he's a damned good carpenter. Besides, maybe mom and sis will come up and can take the tour you offered her."

"You call him and ask him to meet me at the lumberyard, if you would."

"Fine, but I'd better get on the milking before the cows break down the door."

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"Jimbo, good of you to meet me; I need roughly enough framing for a 9' wall 50' long plus three divider walls about 10' deep. I want the walls insulated for privacy and pre-hung hollow core doors. The bathroom will be about 6x6 and contain a stool, sink and shower. I've got a plumber coming out tomorrow. I also want a stout room for firearms storage, maybe two layers of 3/4" plywood and a steel door. The electrician will be out this afternoon to put in the lighting and the plumber tomorrow."

"Cancel the plumber, he's a drunk and I can do better in my sleep than he can sober."

"If you don't mind."

"I only have one question, is this a bomb shelter or a storm shelter?"

"We already have a good storm shelter."

"I kind of wondered who builds a storm shelter 50' deep and only accessible from a basement."

"I suppose you think I'm crazy."

"I'd use the term prudent."

"Can you do this in your head?"

"Close enough. Marty, I want to place an order for delivery early this afternoon. I'll need 2x4s 18' long, say 40 plus 20 20' long. Framing nails for my nail gun, nails and cartridges for my ramset, 5 pre-hung hollow core doors, 1 pre-hung steel door 6 sheets of 3/4" plywood, some of those special hurricane nails, say one box and about 600' of R-11. I need enough 5/8" sheet rock to cover the inside and outside of the walls. Terms are COD and I expect my usual discount. Here's the address."

"Will, the ladies aren't coming up for a couple of days. Is that trailer full?"

“And the pickup too.”

“So you mind paying a little day labor at minimum wage to help unload and such?”

“Know someone?”

“I know a couple of locals down on their luck. Good workers, though.”

“Can you find my place?”

“Jim gave me exact directions.”

“You’d better hope that they’re better than the directions he gave me.”

“Say two hours? The lumber and supplies should be there by then. You have an extension cord?”

“Yes, 2 100’ 15amp.”

I paid up and Jimbo left for his tools and helpers. It seems that money talks and BS walks. I was going to need to be a little tighter with my money, the hogs were just short of market weight and I like to keep a reserve in the corporate account and my personal account. We had 275 hogs at 225 pounds that we’d sell at 250.  $250 \times 275 \times 0.75 = \$51,562.50$  or in round numbers fifty grand. We’d sell another litter before the year was over for about the same money. Well, actually more, we’d added 5 gilts and they should produce a minimum of 6 pigs each. That meant the next sale would be 300 hogs at 250 pounds at 0.75 cents = \$56,350.

The feeder cattle would be sold as two year olds with a market weight on the order of 1,250 pounds for about a buck a pound. The income from that was  $1,250 \times 28 = \$35,000$ . We bred for calves every year and most times were feeding 30 cows, 30 feeders 30 yearlings. I usually butcher two hogs and a beef for the freezer plus those damned chickens. The chicken slaughter would come in late June, early July.

The lumber delivery truck arrived before Jimbo and I had them place the load near the outside basement entrance. Jim and I started dragging the lumber into the shelter. Jimbo and crew arrived at the same time as the electrician. I showed them the chalk marks on the floor and reminded Jim it was 2 15’w×10’d plus 2 10’×10’.

The electrician started by installing the ATS and running a new power cable to and from the breaker box in the house. He mounted the fluorescent fixtures and connected them with armored cable (flex). Next, he mounted the conduit and pulled the wire to the outlets. At that point, he stopped and connected the new wiring to a second breaker box in the generator room. He explained that if we lost power, both the main breaker box and

the second breaker box would be fully powered. We could cut off the power to the house with the switch box next to the new breaker box.

He said he had to leave but would be there at 8am to finish the wiring. The rough framing was done and Jimbo and his two men were finishing up the bathroom. Before they left, we moved the contents of the pickup and trailer into the basement. I had 12 lockers for the bunk rooms and a chest of drawers and queen sized beds for the two bedrooms. There were 6 bunk beds in each dorm. It looked pretty rough at the end of the day; by tomorrow night, it would need seams sanded, a coat of paint and the appliances moved. Plus I had several sets of shelving to assemble.

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Jim, Jimbo and the two other locals showed up at 8:30, barely 30 minutes after the electrician arrived. He was moving along at a good clip and had one dorm wired and was working on the second. Each room got one light, a switch and a double duplex outlet box. He managed to stay ahead of them and was ready to make the final connections by 10:30. After that was done, he installed the duplexes and the switches. Around noon, he flipped the breakers and we had light and power. Next, he tested the generator and the switchover took less than a minute. Finally he connected the power to the AV-300 and we had air.

While that was going on, I assembled shelving and Jim joined me after he finished the chores. I expected him sooner and he explained that he had to muck the stalls and pig pen. We were actually getting close, I'd have to paint the shelter and move the assembled shelves and freezer. The meat was still at the locker plant.

My order from Texas arrived and I put it in the storage cabinet. A few days later the orders from Walton Feed and Nitro-Pak both arrived. We put them in the basement for the moment. I asked if those two fellas would hang on another day and get it painted. They readily agreed, if I could top off a fuel tank. I agreed to that and began to wonder, was I adding the correct amount of PRI-G to the gas. Sixteen ounces of PRI-G treats 256 gallons of gas. There are 473.1765 ml in a pint and that means the amount of PRI-G per gallon is 1.95ml. I'd been using 1.925 ml. I'd adjust that to 9.25, the correct amount for a 5 gallon gas can. About the gas; in July 2007, the price was dramatically lower than what it was a year later.

When it was painted, everything moved to its proper location and the shelves moved, anchored and filled, I was finally ready to show off my/our accomplishments. I picked up some New York Strips, baking potatoes and salad fixings. I invited the Ross family up for dinner on Saturday and suggested they come early. I had a call from Des Moines and my order was in including the Winchester. I told him I was having a shelter warming on Saturday and would see him on Monday or Tuesday.

Jimbo had figured out how to create the door to the tunnel and showed me his plan. It looked like it could work and I told him that if he knew anyone who could fabricate the

steel, do it and I'd pay for it. He replied that he'd have it done and delivered and I could pay the welder COD. The welder called that morning and said he'd deliver the contraption on Monday.

When the family showed up mid-afternoon on Saturday, I gave them the grand tour explaining most of the features incorporated in the shelter. Susan marveled at the quantity of food, and Karen noticed that I had hot water (an afterthought, the lines were in but I forgot to buy a 50 gallon electric hot water heater). The beds were unmade because I needed mattress pads, sheets, bedspreads and pillows. I told them I had an order to pick up in Des Moines and while I was there, I'd stop at Penny's and get the bedding.

Karen kidded me about having an elaborate radio setup and no TV or VHS/DVD player. There were a 27" TV and a VHS/DVD player in my bedroom that I never turned on. I decided that I could put it in the shelter rather than spending more money. I started the oven and put the pre-washed spuds in. Karen helped with the salad, a bagged thing from Hy-Vee. When the potatoes were close to being done, I fired up the grill and asked how everyone liked their steaks. I had 2 medium rare and 3 (including me) medium.

I loved being near her. She was very attractive, was wearing some faint trace of perfume I couldn't identify, was extremely intelligent and a good conversationalist. During the shelter tour, I caught her examining the contents of the gun closet. I thought I saw her nod, but it was so slight, I couldn't be sure. When dinner was over, Susan and Karen gathered the dishes and took them in to wash them while Jimbo, Jim and I sat at the picnic table discussing the state of the world.

"I don't like it," Jimbo said. "Were looking at a recession or worse; gas is going to go up another buck, buck-fifty a gallon, diesel probably more. Have you noticed the price of food is rising because of shortages and higher transportation costs? For two cents, I'd build a shelter for my family."

"You don't need one. How long did it take you to drive here, 15 minutes? This shelter was designed with a capacity of at least 15 but could probably handle 50 in a pinch. The bedroom in the corner is mine and I had the one next to it in mind for you and Susan. There's enough LTS and regular food stored for 50 people for 100 days. My arsenal isn't large, but it's a start. I have some more weapons coming in that I'll pick up on Tuesday. Say, that raises a question, where did you buy those single action holsters and gun belts?"

"There are several choices, El Paso Saddlery, Kirkpatrick Leather Company, Alfonso's Gun leather of Hollywood and about 20 more. I thought you weren't interested in Single Action."

"Everyone needs a hobby. Know anywhere I can get a few good horses? Nothing fancy, just riding horses, hopefully for less than \$1,000 each."

"With or without saddles?"

“Good used saddles should be okay.”

“Want a stallion and several mares?”

“I don’t really know what I want. Broken to saddle and harness; maybe a buggy and a horse drawn wagon. Jimbo, Dad didn’t have horses and I don’t ride. I’m going to have to find someone to teach me, maybe Jim.”

“I can teach you,” Karen said returning from the kitchen. “How much do you pay?”

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 4

“Seven-fifty an hour plus gas.”

“Hey, you don’t give me gas,” Jim chided.

“Maybe not, but you’ve arrived more than once on an empty tank.”

“Did I hear you saying something about a trip to Des Moines?”

“I thought it, but don’t remember saying it Karen. As a matter of fact I have an order to pick up in Des Moines Monday afternoon.”

“You told us you had an order to pick up and planned to stop at Penny’s for bedding.”

“I guess I did say that. What to help me with the bedding? I’d appreciate that. We could probably use bath towels, hand towels and wash cloths.”

“I wanted to do some shopping for clothing for my new job.”

“If we leave early, we can do that. Why don’t you come with Jim on Monday? I’ll leave him enough cash to pay the guy installing the door frame and we’ll do what we can in one trip.”

“I’ll do that.”

Jimbo said he’d look around for a string of horses, at least 4-year-olds broken to saddle and harness. He’d see what he could do about a buggy and the wagon, too. He told me to expect to pay around \$750-\$1,000 per mare, \$250-\$500 for useable saddles and \$2,000 or more for a good stallion. He could spend money as fast as I could!

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“Good morning.”

“Good morning.”

“Jim, I have a welder bringing out a door frame that goes in the basement wall entrance to the shelter. Have him mount it so we can fill the frame with the old basement wall blocks. We will have an extra layer of protection plus conceal the entrance to the shelter. Here’s an envelope with cash. Be sure you get a receipt.”

“Anything else?”



“Not today, just the chores. I don’t know for sure when Karen and I will be back so you may have to milk twice. If you have any questions on that door, call your dad, he designed it.”

“I decided to pull the trailer to Des Moines, just in case; although, I don’t really know just in case of what. We were about 30 minutes into the trip when Karen spoke.

“That a very nice gun collection, two of everything except the big rifle. That must be awfully expensive to shoot.”

“It is Karen, \$5 a round. You try not to waste rounds with a gun like that.”

“What are the M1As, Loaded models?”

“Hardly; they’re the Super Match.”

“That explains why you only have the Black Hills ammo.”

“I wanted the ammo to be as good as the rifles. Do you have an M1A?”

“A fella I dated when I was a junior in college had one and we went shooting once. His rifled was called a Loaded Standard.”

“They renamed them slightly, dropping the Standard and just call them the Loaded now.”

“I didn’t see your pistols.”

“Para Ordnance P-14 and a Taurus PT1911 in .45 auto with Walther PPKs in .380 for backup.”

“First class guns all the way?”

“I saw some of the junk the insurgents used in Iraq, mostly AK-47s. They’ll work under any circumstances, but they’re very inaccurate. Our designated marksmen use M21s which is essentially the same rifle as the Super Match with a different stock. I saw snipers using the Alpha Sierra 50s and the Mike 107s and I don’t believe the AS50 is worth an extra five grand.”

“No AR15s?”

“Absolutely not. I carried a M4 for a full year and fortunately rarely had to use it. The problems with the M4 are a barrel too short to be of any real use and the same fouling problem as the M16.”

“What came in that you have to pick up?”

“Some Ruger revolvers and a Winchester rifle plus the ammo.”

“Single Action?”

“Maybe you can teach me those, too.”

“If I didn’t know better, I’d think you’re trying to get on my better side.”

“You don’t know better and I am, Karen. I would like to get to know you better and be your friend.”

“I think I’ve heard that particular line before.”

“I’m just being as straight with you as I can. I would like very much for us to be friends. My sister is off to Bethany living with her boyfriend and I’m alone on the farm except for Jim. I enjoyed the family gatherings on Independence Day and this past Saturday. My family basically ceased to exist the day I got home from Iraq. I’ve even had to take over the bookkeeping for the farm corporation because Jill’s not around.”

“It seems as if you’ve spent a lot of money.”

“I had a lot of money available to spend, Karen. I was saving for a car when I was in Iraq and had a bundle of cash. Jill and I inherited the farm tax free and Dad had a monster of an insurance policy. My squad leader in Iraq’s father is a prepper or survivalist and a Patriot Fiction writer. I read most of his stories, took what good ideas I found and used the money available to implement them.”

“But you have so much.”

“I’ll admit it, I have a lot. In a year or two, we’ll see if you still think I have too much. I’m in the process of increasing the size of my herds so we can use all the grain we grow right on the farm and won’t have to sell any. Beef is a buck and hogs seventy-five cents and I did major in animal science not agronomy.”

“What pays the best, beef or hogs?”

“Hogs. Two litters a year versus birth one per year on the cattle. We do chickens in the summer for butchering and I keep a dozen laying hens year round for eggs. I generally butcher two hogs and a beef each year but probably won’t this year because my freezer is fairly full. I may live on the Iowa side of the line, but the nearest large town is Bethany.”

“We’re here, come in and see what I bought and I’ll finish paying for it.”

“Is this your sister Jill?”

“Nope.”

“The young lady from the Independence Day picnic?”

“Yep.”

“You chose well.”

“What am I missing here?”

“Nothing Karen. Did you get the Winchester?”

“I told you I might get lucky and I did. Got a good price on the Vaqueros, too and even on the ammo. I owe you a refund on the revolvers, want cash or is there something else in the store I can let you have?”

“I haven’t paid for the Winchester.”

“Oh, that’s right, sorry. Let me add it up while you fill out the 4473 for the rifle. I got some more Black Hills 175gr Match BTHP in. Didn’t get the .45 Colt ammo yet.”

“I’ll take two cases of Black Hills.”

“I thought you might. There are just some things you can’t have too much of. How did you make out at Costco?”

“Before I got there, I got the appliances, furniture and plumbing and electrical fixtures. I must have made a dozen trips in and out of Costco. I need to shop for bedding for the beds in the shelter and she needs to shop for work clothes. Depending on the amount of time left, I thought we might go to Costco again, I brought the trailer.”

“Did you check those LTS food places?”

“Walton Feed and Nitro-Pak. I laid in a good food supply. I got the extra things from Texas, too.”

“You’re right on the border aren’t you?”

“The border is the southern boundary of my farm.”

“Not that it will happen, but should we get into a GTW, Omaha and Lincoln are likely targets. You might get some fallout.”

“You have my address, why don’t you come down some weekend and assess what I’ve done?”

“Will she be there?”

“Karen?”

“Yes.”

“I rather doubt it, we’re not even dating.”

“Young man, she appears to be a winner, don’t let her get away.”

“I’ll do my best.”

o

“I’m afraid we’ll have to park off a block or two from Penny’s because of the trailer.”

“Why did you bring that?”

“I thought if we had enough time, we might stop at Costco, Sam’s Club and/or Wal-Mart.”

“Don’t you have enough food?”

“Probably, but there are some things a person can’t have too much of, like bathroom tissue.”

“I didn’t see any feminine hygiene supplies.”

“I don’t use them and I don’t know either you or your mother well enough to inquire in that area.”

“This could be slightly embarrassing.”

“No more for you than for me, Karen.”

“You can park in that lot; it’s only two blocks from Penny’s.”

“Okay.”

The guy charged me double because of the trailer. It wasn’t that expensive and it wouldn’t do much good to complain. Once in Penny’s, we started in the Women’s Department and Karen was able to find several nice, but serviceable outfits. I offered to take them back to the truck while she looked for bedding. I suggested two of everything for each of the beds and reminded her there were 12 bunks (twin) and two queen sized beds.

By the time I returned, she had the sheets, pillow cases, mattress pads and was working on bedspreads. They didn't have a large number of any particular color and we ended up with a rainbow assortment. The sheets and pillow cases were the basic white percale. I paid cash and considering the amount and the volume of the purchase they got a stock person to help getting the purchases to the car. I got the truck from the lot and we loaded up the things in the back of the truck. I'd laid Karen's bags on the back seat.

We stopped at a Wally World and Karen made the purchases of the hygiene supplies and put them in the truck. We picked up some miscellaneous groceries to fill in. Then we went to Sam's Club and I joined so we could make more bulk purchases of the things that Costco didn't carry. I was rather surprised at what I had overlooked. We found Coke on sale and each bought the limit of 4 cases. Finally, we went to Costco and began the process of emptying their toilet paper display. Karen was looking in their meat cases and added some things I hadn't. It was things we could freeze like sliced lunch meat, sausage, etc.

By the time we got back, Jim was gone. He was supposed to wait until Karen got back so he could take her home. We put the perishables in refrigerators or freezers and detached the trailer.

"It's late; could I take you out to eat in Bethany?"

"You don't have to do that Will; I can get something at home."

"I'd like to take you out to dinner if you'd permit."

"Hardee's?"

"How about sea food? Or, maybe Italian or Chinese?"

"I'll eat any of it, you pick the place."

We ended up at Dos Chiquita's, a Mexican restaurant. There are several restaurants in Bethany, but not many good ones. Most are what I'd call average and only a few would be classified as bad. We visited throughout the meal, getting to know each other just a bit better. We shared some likes and dislikes, talked about her training me to ride and enjoyed our meal. All too soon it was time to take her home and when we got there, I helped her carry her purchases into the house.

"Jimbo, can you come by tomorrow or the next day and show me what we need to do to finish that door?"

"Sure, have a nice trip?"

“It was late when we got back so I took Karen to the Mexican place for dinner.”

“Karen ate Mexican? Well, I’ll be damned.”

“It was good Dad.”

“The company or the food?”

“Both.”

“I’ve got to go, Jimbo. See you when you come up.”

o

When I got home, I checked the various sources for gun leather that Jim told me about. I didn’t care for the stuff El Paso made and Alfonso way too expensive. I liked two rigs I saw at Kirkpatrick and planned to call them the next day and see if they could combine the cross draw with the double allowing me to have the 7½” on my strong side, the 5½” on the other side and the 4⅝” in the cross draw. I also wanted to ask if it was possible to make the belt wider to hold two rows of 24 cartridges each. The two Jim’s arrived early and the younger started milking while Jimbo and I examined the steel door frame.

“Perfect. I brought my Skilsaw with the diamond edged blade, do you have some mortar?”

“Tell me what you need and I go to Bethany and get some. I can be back before you finish cutting the bottom row of stone.”

“I doubt that, but you need to tell Marty I want two bags of the standard mortar mix I usually buy.”

It was positively neat the way Jimbo had designed the door. The cut blocks set on a shelf with a lip that extended to the floor. We mixed some mortar and once they were in place; you couldn’t tell that the wall wasn’t the original wall. Better still, even if you knew that it was a door, you couldn’t tell how to unlock it.

“I saw this on TV, Will. During Prohibition, 21 Club had a liquor storage room in the basement hidden behind a wall. You used a long steel hook to release the latch. Same principle here provided you can find the hole. I figure you might want to put something on wheels in front of the wall, but that’s up to you.”

“It’s so, I don’t know, James Bond comes to mind. That author I like had a hidden gun room in the first story he wrote, *The Ark*. It was way more complicated than using a hook, but I don’t think we need to go that way.”

"I had him put on that sheet of steel plate on the backside, in case someone figured out it was a doorway. That's some surplus armor plating and about an inch thick. I have no idea how much it weighs, probably a few tons."

"His fee wasn't too bad; he must have gotten a deal on the surplus plate."

"Or, stole it; you never know about that guy, but he does good work and he's cheap."

"Any news on finding horses?"

"I have some leads that I want to check out, but nothing yet."

"I plan to call Kirkpatrick Leather about a rifle scabbard and a western rig."

"Find something you like?"

"Two, actually, the Laredoan double and the Laredoan cross draw. I was going to call them and see about combining the two and adding an extra row of cartridge loops."

"I don't think you'll be happy. It will weigh a ton and a wide belt like that would be uncomfortable. Karen said you bought 3 revolvers."

"Yes Jimbo, the case hardened 2005 Ruger Vaqueros in the three barrel lengths. I also managed to get a Winchester legacy in .45 Colt."

"I guess that eliminates some things from your wedding gift list."

"What wedding?"

"Why Karen and yours of course."

"We've only been out to dinner once and not on even one date."

"Are you saying you're not interested?"

"Oh, I'm interested and I'd be lying if I said I weren't. Isn't there supposed to be a period in the beginning where you get to know more about each other? After which you each decide if you want to take it further? And then, isn't it up to the man to propose?"

"That's the way it's supposed to work. You put in a bedroom for yourself in that shelter, but your single, so why did you put in a queen sized bed?"

"It was an economy measure."

"You bought those after you met Karen."

“I did, I can’t deny that.”

“When you bought those firearms, you bought two of each model except the Tac-50.”

“I bought a set for my sister Jill. She’s changed and wouldn’t take them so I replaced the one she took.”

“And, right after the Independence Day picnic, you ordered those Single Action Revolvers and the Winchester.”

“True.”

“And last night she went out with you to eat dinner and you ended up in a Mexican restaurant, right? That would be the first time, to my knowledge, that she’s ever eaten Mexican food.”

“I didn’t know that, but they weren’t many good places open. Karen is attractive, smart and just about everything in a woman that a man looks for. I think she’s independently minded, but not controlling. She’s the sort of woman who would make a blouse out of a Gadsden flag.”

“You should hear what she has to say about you.”

“I’d love to.”

“Ask her, not me. Loose lips sink ships. If you want good restaurants, take her to Lamoni.”

o

I hadn’t even considered Lamoni and it was as close as or closer than Bethany. I chose Bethany because that’s where Karen lived and Lamoni was in the opposite direction. I realized that we were making finding good horses harder than it needed to be. The Amish have plenty of horses and probably have some for sale. They surely have buggies and wagons.

Amish can be found in northeast Iowa, in an area that runs from Independence to Oelwein and encompasses the villages of Hazleton and Fairbanks. Another large Amish settlement is located mostly south of Kalona and north of Washington. The Kalona settlement is the largest in the United States west of the Mississippi. Other smaller Amish settlements are located in Davis County, between Milton and Cantril along Iowa Highway 2 in Van Buren County, south of Chariton in Lucas County and near Lamoni in Decatur County.

“Karen, it’s Will.”



“Hi.”

“Hi. After I talked with your dad and he mentioned restaurants in Lamoni, I got to thinking about the Amish community near Lamoni. They might be a good place for him to find horses and tack.”

“You should be telling him this, not me.”

“No, I wanted to talk to you. I have all of the stuff we bought in Des Moines stacked and could use some help putting it away, sorting it, making beds and domestic chores. I could repay you for your help by taking you out to dinner in Lamoni and maybe catching a show.”

“Are you asking me for a date?”

“Yes.”

“What time Saturday?”

“As early as is convenient. And, bring some dress up casuals for dinner and the show.”

“Is there a lot to do?”

“It’s Jim’s day off and I have milking, feeding the livestock, gathering eggs and the usual chores. I’ve been washing the bedding and folding it to remove the sizing.”

“I didn’t see a washer and dryer in the shelter.”

“That’s because I didn’t put them in.”

“You know those small stacked duos like the one Sears brought out years ago? It might be a good idea to add the combo to the shelter. Nobody is going to be thinking about bringing clothes if they are heading to the shelter.”

“I’ll check Sears. If I find one that I think will do, I’ll order it and have it delivered.”

“Okay. I guess I can be there around 8:30 Saturday morning.”

“Thank you.”

I went to the Sears online website and found a White Frigidaire 27” Front Load Electric Laundry Center that seemed to be a good choice. One feature that I liked was that it was quiet. I placed the order for store pickup, COD, because I didn’t have a Sears Card. I would have to go to Des Moines on Thursday and pick it up at Merle Hay Mall. There weren’t many Sears stores close.

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 5

Because of moving so many appliances, I'd caved in and bought a good appliance cart. It helped, but moving that freezer to the shelter had been an exercise in planning. The stacked unit didn't come with a power cord for the dryer, another \$35. I didn't have a 30 amp power outlet and the electrician charged me \$65 bucks for that, saying I got a deal. I placed one set of bed linens on each bed and put the second set either in the bottom dresser drawer or the top locker shelf.

I'll have to say that it was coming along well. The white walls were intended to produce a clean look, but they were boring. The only things that broke up the monotony were the appliances. After I returned from Des Moines on Thursday and got the laundry center installed, I got a beer out of the shelter refrigerator and sat down at the table, trying to think of anything I might have missed.

We'd have to enter the tunnel every 100 hours or so to change the oil in the generator. What would we do for power while it was being serviced? How about a small portable diesel we could run until the oil was changed? What would the radiation level be in the tunnel? How about an AMP 200 remote to measure the outside radiation and using the CD V-717 to monitor the radiation level in the tunnel? How about both? What about the bath towels, hand towel and wash cloths? Put one set in each locker and two sets in each dresser?

A person could allow the unanswered questions to drive them crazy. I'd looked at the map and any radiation danger we'd face in case of a GTW was from Lincoln, Nebraska, not Omaha. However, we weren't anywhere near having a GTW. We had always planted a garden in the past, when mom was alive. It was different now, Jill was in Bethany and I was alone except for when Jim was here helping. I could grow the produce, but if it had to be canned, I was in trouble. I planted two hills of watermelon and several of potatoes plus two rows of onions. I figured when the onions were ready, I could pull them and let them sun-dry for a day or two and bag them. The potatoes would come later, but we'd had watermelon for desert for our cookout. The watermelon was almost growing faster than I could eat it. Maybe I could harvest it for seeds.

"This is Smith at the gun store in Des Moines. You invited me down some weekend; how does this weekend sound?"

"Saturday is tied up, but you'd be welcome to come on Sunday."

"After church? Okay, that should work. Is there anything I can bring you?"

"I'll take a case of the cowboy ammo if you have it."

"Anything else?"

“Not unless you can sell me Black Hills for 50 cents a round.”

“How’s that girlfriend of yours?”

“She’s fine.”

“You can say that again.”

“About 2:00 Sunday afternoon?”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

Karen had her hair tied up in a ponytail. I showed her the laundry center and that I’d laid out sheets, pillow covers and bedspreads. The milking was done and I had to gather eggs and feed the livestock before I could lend a hand. It didn’t take me all that long to finish my chores but when I returned to the shelter to help, she had 14 beds made, the feminine hygiene supplies in the cabinet in the bathroom and was moving food to various shelves. We were beginning to run out of storage in the shelter and I asked if she needed me to assemble the final set of shelves.

“Yes, please. That’s about all we have room for though, so I hope you didn’t buy any more.”

“Actually I did, but not with the shelter in mind. My mother used to grow a large garden and can every year. I’ve been acquiring new and used canning jars and storing them in the basement. I’m sure you’ve seen the boxes.”

“What did she use for a canner?”

“I think it was a Presto or Mirro pressure canner that held 7 quart jars.”

“Have you heard of the All American Pressure canner?”

“How is it different?”

“It doesn’t require a gasket. The largest size will hold 32 pint jars or 19 quart jars.”

“Think I should get one?”

“That’s up to you Will, but one batch in it is about the same as 2½ batches in the one you have. Do you have spare gaskets for your canner?”

“I don’t think so. Mom was going to buy one and then she got sick. We didn’t plant a garden that year or after from what I can tell. I used up the remaining home canned goods after I got home.”

“How did your mother die?”

“Ovarian cancer. My father had something called supraventricular tachycardia that sometimes made him dizzy. He got dizzy while he was driving up with Jill to meet me at Camp Dodge. I think the crash killed him, not a heart attack, but the results were the same.”

“Were you closer to your father than your mother?”

“No, Dad taught me farming and Mom helped with my school work and made sure I got into college. I think I cared for them equally. Jill was little sister until the accident. I believe that took something out of her.”

“So much tragedy.”

“Karen, all the tragedy I’ve seen in my life doesn’t account for one day of tragedy I saw in Iraq.”

“I think we’re done.”

“Would you like to go shooting for a while?”

“Which gun?”

“The Super Match?”

“Sure, why not?”

Karen didn’t need any lessons from me when it came to shooting unless it was how the sight adjustments worked. I’m sure she would have figured it out on her own with very few shots. We started at 100-meters and worked back to 200, 300 and 400.

“I can’t believe I’m shooting this well.”

“You have a good rifle, good ammo and an excellent eye. Want to try 500-meters? It gets tougher the further back you are.”

“I know. Why not? What’s the maximum effective range with iron sights?”

“Five hundred yards or about 460 meters; and, with optics, up to at least 800 meters or about 875 yards.”

“I think we’d better stop at 500-meters Will. What kind of optics would be good?”

“Leupold Mark IV 4.5-14x50mm LR/T M1. I’d probably use the A.R.M.S. mount and rings. I could probably get the scopes for around \$600 and the mounts for an additional \$2-300.”

“That sounds like a lot.”

“Not for a rifle that cost \$2,800.”

“You definitely have to get the canner, you do everything first class.”

“Does that include my choice in dates?”

“Absolutely.”

“Yeah, modest, too. When we get back, you can go ahead and clean up while I milk the cows. I’ll come in when I’m done and we can leave for Lamoni in 30 minutes.”

o

When I got in, Karen was in Jill’s room with the door closed, probably brushing out her hair. I got a quick shower, shaved and dressed in my western style casual.

We seemed to be stuck in late summer. Karen had innocently turned my life upside down and I was smitten. Do you remember that song, *Lady in Red* by Chris De Burgh? The lyrics were:

*I've never seen you looking so lovely as you did tonight  
I've never seen you shine so bright  
I've never seen so many men ask you if you wanted to dance  
They're looking for a little romance  
Given half a chance  
And I've never seen that dress you're wearing  
Or that highlights in your hair  
That catch your eyes  
I have been blind*

*The lady in red is dancing with me  
Cheek to cheek  
There's nobody here  
It's just you and me  
Its where I wanna be  
But I hardly know this beauty by my side  
I'll never forget the way you look tonight*

*I've never seen you looking so gorgeous as you did tonight  
I've never seen you shine so bright you were amazing*

*I've never seen so many people want to be there by your side  
And when you turned to me and smiled it took my breath away  
And I have never had such a feeling such a feeling  
Of complete and utter love, as I do tonight*

*The lady in red is dancing with me  
Cheek to cheek  
There's nobody here  
It's just you and me  
It's where I wanna be  
But I hardly know this beauty by my side  
I'll never forget the way you look tonight*

*I never will forget the way you look tonight  
The lady in red  
My lady in red*

The song was written in reference to (though not specifically about) his first wife Diane and was released on the album *Into The Light*, reaching #1 in the UK charts in July 1986, and peaking on the Billboard charts at #3 in May of 1987 when I was 4 years old. It got occasional play even into the late nineties so that must be where I'd heard it.

A couple of the guys had it on CD when we were in Iraq, so maybe that's where I heard it. I only bring it up because she came out of Jill's bedroom dressed in a red dress and I almost couldn't breathe. I must have been standing there with my jaw on the floor because she asked, "Do you approve?"

"Uh, I can change into slacks and a jacket."

"For dinner and a movie, don't be silly. I like your western look."

The selection of restaurants in Lamoni wasn't much better than Bethany. We narrowed it to Grandma's House, Quilt Country Family Restaurant and The Raging Buffalo and then did paper, scissors, stone. Hello, Grandma. For entertainment we had one choice, the Coliseum. At least Bethany had a movie theatre. We returned to the farm and put on a movie, *The American President*.

I was embarrassed about how our evening out had turned out. The food was okay, but nothing we couldn't have made ourselves. Rural town Iowa was and had been for some time, the pits. Karen was enjoying the movie and I popped some popcorn and got out some cokes.

"Do you have anything to put in this?"

"You mean ice?"

“I mean something like rum.”

Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker? No way. “I’ve got some Myers’s Dark Rum.”

“I love Myer’s.”

Fortunately, there was only about ½” in the bottle, perhaps enough for one or two drinks. Karen had her rum and coke and didn’t ask for more. We finished the movie, I apologized about the way the trip to Lamoni had gone and she told me that she enjoyed the company and had a wonderful time. Maybe, she suggested, we should just drive around and scout for good restaurants. Bethany was the County seat and the largest city/town/village in Harrison County. Although Leon was the County seat for Decatur County, Lamoni had the largest population. It was also an excuse to spend more time with Karen.

o

The Ross family was, in their own way, adopting me. I had their youngest working for me and was head over heels smitten with their oldest. I believe I worried that she might meet another teacher her age and fall for him. Be that as it may, Smith was right on time. He was lugging the case of cowboy ammo and set it down and returned to his car and picked up a case of Black Hills 175gr BTHP.

“I can’t go fifty cents, how does seventy five cents sound?”

“Sounds like you just sold a case of ammo. I’ll take more at that price.”

“It costs me \$365 plus shipping. I can’t really go \$375 on a regular basis, but I suppose I could go \$400.”

“I’ll take any part of 20 cases you can get.”

“Doing more shooting?”

“I have a shooting partner and she’s as good as or better than me. I need optics for the M1As. What I had in mind was Leupold Mark IV 4.5-14x50mm LR/T M1 with A.R.M.S. mount and rings.”

That should run you about \$850 per rifle.”

“That is about what I figured. How long to get them in?”

“Maybe a week; I’ll call with a total and you can mail me a check.”

“Let’s check out the shelter. We’re in the basement and somewhere in this room is the entrance to the shelter. You can find it while I’ll get my check book.”

“Four solid stone walls, sorry, I just don’t see it.”

“You know about 21 Club?”

“I thought of that, but I don’t see a hole for a wire or a wire to put in the hole.”

“You have to slide this cabinet out to find the wire. The hole is right here.”

“If you were inside would the wire still work?”

“Not if we throw the bolts. I’ll show you.”

“Steel plate?”

“Armor plate, 1” thick.”

“Jeez, you’re a bonafide survivalist.”

“The tunnel has about a 5% grade down to the shelter. This room here is for the generator. I just added the 12kw China diesel for power when we service the big generator.”

“How big is big?”

“About 250 amps, maximum. You should recognize that, the sensing element for a CD V-717.”

“Is that one of those Swiss blast doors?”

“Yes.”

“But, you already have a blast door.”

“That’s new; this went in when we built the shelter. I decided to turn the shelter into the hidden room.”

“TOM?”

“His first story where Clarence found the gun room behind the back bar. Check this out and tell me what you think.”

“Bedrooms on the left?”

“Two bunk rooms for six people each, one for males and the other for the females. Beyond that on the left is the bedroom I’ve assigned to Karen’s folks. The last bedroom is mine. In the far right corner is the ¾ bathroom and next to it is a small gun closet. Next



you have the kitchen area, a storage cabinet for electronics and medicines and finally the radio shack.”

“All neatly packaged, I must say. I was right about 15 people, but you have supplies for 15 people for at least a year and more in the basement. I don’t understand why you don’t have more firearms.”

“Actually I have eight long arms and seven hand guns that I bought from you. Karen’s family has a cabinet full of lever action firearms and several new in the box Colt and Winchesters. They’re into cowboy action shooting so I suppose they probably have some coach guns.”

“Springfield Armory changed the barrel on the Standard to six grooves. It not match grade, but if I bought enough, maybe I could get you a good price. If you’re interested, I shop around some.”

“You look and I’ll think. When I sell this next lot of hogs, I’d have the money.”

“I’ll look for some surplus. I might be able to get some of that South African; Aim Surplus has it for \$187 for 980 rounds.”

“I’ll order direct, but if you get some let me know, I’ll probably take it. And yes on the rifles if the price is reasonable.”

We visited while longer and he left. I went on the web and found their website and phone number. I planned to call in the morning.

“Aim Surplus.”

“Hi, my name is Will Sherman and I’m calling about the South African surplus. Do you have quite a bit?”

“Probably a five to six week supply.”

“Are you limiting purchases?”

“Just to what you can afford.”

“How many rounds in an ammo can?”

“1,260, but we have to remove two battle packs or it’s too heavy to ship by UPS.”

“How many ammo cans on a pallet?”

“I don’t really know I’d have to count.”

“I like to purchase a full pallet and have it shipped motor freight. If you can give me your banking information and a total, I can have my bank wire the funds.”

“We checked; there are 60 cans per pallet. My assistant says \$14,425 plus shipping. I’d have to check on shipping.”

“Can you call me back? I’ve already faxed my driver’s license and military ID Card.”

“I have it here. Give me your number.”

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Interstate motor freight is much cheaper than UPS. Way cheaper. Not counting freight, the ammo cost about 19 cents per round. At the time, I didn’t realize that those cartridges would be selling for 43 cents a round by July the following year. And to top it off, I still had 11,000 rounds of the Back Hills with another 10,000 rounds on order.

Shortly after, we got busy bringing in the harvest, shipping the hogs to market and checking on the beef we could sell. I checked my bank balances and ordered the tanks topped off. I needed another freezer and Karen and I drove to Des Moines to pick it up. While I didn’t need to add meat to the freezer, my hinky feeling told me to do it.

Smith recommended Ark Institute for heirloom seeds and I ordered 6 packages, with an assortment of 40 different kinds of seeds per package. We generally don’t use kerosene for anything but I got 2 55-gallon drums for lamp oil and 2 bulk rolls of wicks. Mom had workable oil lamps dispersed around the house in their original wall mounts. Shortly after Smith called to say he had the rifles at \$1,300 per copy. The pallet of SA containing 75,600 rounds of high quality surplus.

We did another trial run on the still and the biodiesel converter using used vegetable oil from stores in both Lamoni and Bethany. It worked as intended and I gave Jim a list of chemicals and a blank signed check. The lye was easy to get, the methanol much more difficult. The pallet of 7.62 NATO was stored in a locked basement room. All four members of the Ross family helped with the chickens and I took the beef and two hogs to the locker plant. I was short of freezer space even with the new freezer, another 25ft<sup>3</sup> chest freezer.

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Karen and I started to date on a regular basis and often made road trips on Saturdays after the chores were done, seeing the sights and hunting for above average restaurants. She discovered the locked basement room and asked about it.

“It’s a pallet load of surplus 7.62 NATO ammo.”

“Is that a lot?”

“Around 75,000-rounds. I also got a better price on the Black Hills from Smith and bought another 20 cases of the 175gr Match BTHP.”

“You knew Daddy has some military rifles didn’t you?”

“I thought all he had was lever action rifles.”

“Those too, but a long time ago H & K imported a model 91 rifle into the US. They were fairly expensive, he says. He had a good year selling hogs and cattle and bought six. I think that they’re now worth 5 times more than he paid for them.”

“How much did they cost?”

“About \$400. He has about 150 magazines but he only has a little surplus ammo.”

“I didn’t tell you, but Smith gave me a really good deal on some Standard model M1As and I bought six. He’s looking now for six good used Colt M1911s.”

“You might want to move that surplus ammo into the tunnel. It would be a shame if your home caught fire and set it off.”

“I’ll ask Jim to help me with that on Monday. Those ammo boxes are very heavy, and I darned near broke my back moving them from where the freight company dropped them off to that basement room. I got the canner you mentioned from a company in Utah, Canning Pantry. They had regular mouth lids by the case and I got two cases of those. Most of the stores around seem to have leftover quarts and pints at the end of canning season and I managed to add a dozen cases.”

“Planning on a big garden next year?”

“More like thinking about it. I have the seeds, most of the jars I’d need and a new canner. I don’t know squat about canning garden produce.”

“Where did you want to go today?”

“Would Des Moines be ok?”

“Another all day shopping trip?”

“One stop or two. I want to see how Smith is doing and I need another freezer.”

“But, you already have two freezers.”

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 6

“I know, Karen. But I’ve gotten the cart ahead of the horse and need another freezer.”

“That reminds me; Daddy found you a string of horses; a stallion and five mares with tack. The mares are with foal so you won’t be riding them for a while and you’ll have a fair sized vet bill. However, you’ll end up with 11 horses.”

“I’m going to need his guidance about allocating space in the barn.”

“You have more than enough room, for now. That barn is older than Daddy and the guy who built it probably farmed with horses. He found a buggy and wagon, but you have to deal with the Amish guy who has them.”

“When did you start wearing western casual?”

“I had them for a long time, Will. We wore them for Single Action Shooting. The only thing I have that’s new is the hat.”

It was the first time she’d worn her western dress around me and I liked it. The hat was strangely familiar and was obviously the same model I chose to wear, the Stetson, black Calvary hat with the 3” flat brim. I got my hat from the Global Security online store and when I bought my Calvary hat I bought a second, without the trim and changed the hat-band. I also had a set of the gold combat spurs.

“Well, look at the two of you. The Black Hills is in and I have 5 of the 6 M1911s. I’m still looking for more of the South African.”

“I bought a pallet load of that, you can stop looking on my behalf.”

“I think the price is going to go through the roof, I’ll keep looking.”

“Let’s get the paperwork done on the guns you have so far and get the ammo loaded into the trailer. Can you recommend a good restaurant?”

“Try the Speakeasy up on Euclid. It really depends on what you want; you can get most anything here in Des Moines.”

The pistols came in around \$2,000 total, including sales tax. I told Smith to order 12,000-rounds each of 200gr Lawman and +P Gold Dot and get me some magazines. He suggested Ammoman. We also had to do the 3310.4 so the ATF would know I was building an armory. We hit Sears at Merle Hay Plaza and got the third freezer. Now I could pick up the rest of the meat from the locker plant. On the way back across Douglas/Euclid, we stopped for fast food at a Burger King.

“We have about 5 hours before dinner time, what would you like to see?”

“Museums.”

“We have the Iowa Historical Museum, the Wallace House Museum, the State of Iowa Historical Building, the Fort Des Moines Museum and Living History Farms. Which one?”

“All of them that we have time to visit.”

“Living History Farms is an all-day event; how about the Historical Building and the Historical Museum, if we have time?”

“Lead the way.”

The way it worked out, we only saw one exhibition, the Historical Building. Des Moines could be a History Teacher’s dream come true. We headed to the Speakeasy and were seated fairly quickly. Over dinner, Karen said, “I’d really like to see Living History Farms, could we stay over?”

“I didn’t bring a change of clothes.”

“Neither did I, but there was a Penny’s store in the mall and we can pick up what we need.”

“Won’t your folks be worried?”

“I’ll call them from the motel.”

“Okay, if we can find a motel with two rooms.”

“One room with two beds; same difference, right?”

“Well, sort of, I suppose.”

I figured, “What the hell, I can always claim I didn’t know how to do something, but I spent the night at a Holiday Inn.”

Our day was far from over. We hit Penny’s and I got a package of shorts and one of T-shirts, a new shirt and a pair of pajamas. Karen got new underclothing and a nightie, from Victoria’s Secret. I didn’t know exactly what she bought; I waited outside on a bench. We got a room at Holiday Inn with two queen sized beds and put our things in the room. It was still early and she wanted to see a movie.

“I liked that, I wonder why it got such bad reviews.”

“I always said the best movies were probably the ones that the critics panned.”

"It's getting late. Can we stop for a drink and go to our room?"

"Sure, they have a bar at the Holiday Inn."

Karen got a Myers and Coke and I had a Jack and soda. We returned to our room and she suggested we shower to save time the next morning and insisted that I go first. I got my clean (new) clothes and pjs and got my shower. Thank God you can get a disposable razor and small can of shaving soap, a toothbrush and paste most anywhere including the motel lobby.

When I came out, she was sitting on one bed watching TV and I turned down the covers on the other and climbed in. She left at a commercial break with one of her packages and I heard the shower start. I turned the TV off and put the light on low. I was almost asleep when she came out wearing that nightie she bought. She turned the light off and slipped into bed with me. The day turned out to be a learning experience for both of us. She must have gotten an A in Sex Ed. I almost proposed on the spot.

"Get a good night's sleep?"

"After I got to sleep, yes."

"What neither of us has been willing to say is that we were smitten from the day we met on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July."

"I told your father that you are attractive, smart and just about everything in a woman that a man looks for. You're independently minded, but not controlling. You're the sort of woman who would make a blouse out of a Gadsden flag."

"He told me. Have you made any special plans for June?"

"That's months away. About the only plans I have are to plant the corn and beans. Wait a minute, are you saying what I think you are saying?"

"I accept."

"But I haven't asked yet."

"No, but you will and you shouldn't have to wait for an answer. Any good jewelry stores in Merle Hay Mall?"

"Several. Would you rather go shopping than to go to Living History Farms?"

"I thought you'd never ask."

It was about 1½ carats, brilliant cut, grade D, flawless and it wasn't cheap. I got the whole set, but had to write a check because I didn't have quite enough cash. We returned to the farm and unloaded the freezer, guns and ammo. Then, we had to go to Bethany and I had to face Jimbo.

"Bout damned time. That must have set you back a bunch."

"Don't ask. Karen said you have some HK91s. I've never seen one except in pictures, care to show me one?"

"We've only shot 4 of them, and I still have two that are nib. They'd probably fetch a couple of thousand."

"I had a chance to pick up some South African surplus so don't buy ammo, I have enough."

"I wouldn't want to shoot up your ammo."

"I bought sixty cans."

"First class all the way?"

"I try. Sure did well on picking a bride."

"I'd have to agree with that. Watch it; she has a mind of her own. Your best bet is just to say *yes ma'am* and follow her lead."

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Warning, be careful when you place a help wanted ad in the newspaper, strange things happen. I used the Bethany Republican Clipper. The nightie Karen bought wasn't intended to be worn for very long. She told me that the model was: Sexy Little Things® Lace peek-a-boo babydoll. She also said that it was the first time in her life she'd bought and worn, albeit briefly, anything like that. She preferred knee length gowns that were more modest. She went on to say that 90% of the times when she wasn't at work, she wore jeans and a blouse or polo shirt.

I told her that had she climbed in bed with me wearing anything else, the result would have been the same. I went on to say, that I'd wondered and worried about how we would get to that part of the relationship, but I wasn't going to be the one that pushed. Her reply was that I should have pushed and she would have responded.

I planned ahead and ordered more canning jars, assembled the additional shelving, replaced mom and dad's old full sized bed with a new king size. Jim helped me move the ammo cans to the tunnel, and even got me started riding the stallion once he had him

tamed a bit. He told me to be not scared or the horse would sense it and it would be Katie bar the door, here come the Indians.

I finally decided on the Laredoan cross draw rig and one scabbard for my horse. I was basically undetermined whether I'd continue to ride the stallion or switch to a mare. Karen started spending the weekends, most of the time – probably 3 out of 4, and we were busy redecorating the house, planning a garden and an endless number of chores.

I got the corn and beans in and she had started the garden by the time the 14<sup>th</sup> of June rolled around. We were married at the United Methodist Church and Jimbo and Susan hosted the reception out on their farm. I got to meet many of Karen's fellow teachers and a couple of the guy's gave me a hard look. They had the same chance as I did, not my problem. I was guessing that they were very liberal and didn't like firearms. That was confirmed when I made a point to invite them up to our farm to go shooting.

I had a non-professional Iowa CCW, probably because the Sheriff gave a little slack to those of us in the National Guard. That was pretty much a County to County thing with widely varying standards based on the Sheriff's personal attitude. The legislation proposed this year to make Iowa a shall issue state died in the legislature. Shortly after our wedding, I took Karen to meet the Sheriff and get her CCW. Her Missouri driver's license already carried the CCW endorsement. She applied for an Iowa driver's license only after she got her Iowa CCW.

When they asked for her Missouri license, she went through the motions of getting it out of her purse only to discover it was missing. She told them her license number and they must have checked, because she got her license right away. The idea behind that is that states collect your previous driver's license so you aren't running around with two and alternate between the two if you get stopped by a LEO. We put together a BOB for her car in case something happened while she was at work.

The garden was as large as I can remember and we ended up buying a second All American canner and more jars. Susan had a large supply of empty jars and rather than planting her own garden, went in with us and took home filled jars. The mares foaled and we got two colts and 3 fillies. They're really cute when they're young. I've had higher vet bills, too.

Jimbo got the Amish farmer who sold the horses talked into looking at the foals and telling us what they would need for tack. The farmer was a long time horse breeder and knew the blood lines of the foals, their parents, etc. The only problem was the guy refused to ride in a car. It was a half day buggy ride to our farm and while the breeder might not expect to be compensated, we had to do something.

Karen and Susan put together an assortment of homemade jams and jellies, two boxes worth. It wasn't much, but I sure hoped he'd accept it. He came down on July 14<sup>th</sup>. He looked the foals over, looked Karen and I over, asked if we planned to gild to colts (yes) and stood there thinking.



“English, you need 15” saddles and don’t get anything fancy. Fancy saddles cost more and aren’t much different from a standard ranch saddle.”

“Thank you, would you join us for lunch?”

“A sandwich, perhaps?”

“We have homemade lemonade.”

“That would be good, thank you.”

“I put a box in the back of your buggy in appreciation of your long ride down here.”

“Thank you. I ask \$50 for an evaluation.”

Maybe not so old fashioned after all? You see them in towns buying things and the money had to come from somewhere. I’d always assumed it came from selling livestock and grain. However, \$50 for a full day of the man’s time wasn’t much in the long run. He even suggested a good source for the saddles. The saddles were made by Miller and sold by a firm in Kentucky. He recommended the Model 102 Trail Pleasure with Western Fenders.

Jimbo disagreed with him on the saddle only to the point that he recommended 16” saddles. Other than that, Miller was a good brand of saddle. It was another five grand plus, but we had the hog money and it didn’t present a problem. What did present a problem was my little sister Jill. She wanted me to buy her out. She said she’d settle for book value of the stock she owned. That’s good because that was all that it was worth, on paper. However, I didn’t have enough in the corporate or my personal account to pay her off and had to talk to the banker.

I showed him the books and the loan committee approved the transaction because this was a successful operation, despite the mess the country was in. That’s right, it’s now July 2008 and all you have to do is read your morning paper to understand what I’m talking about. Jill was an idiot because the farm was worth several times the book value. But, given her attitude towards me and especially Karen, who she called a gold digger to her face, it didn’t really bother me. Blood isn’t always thicker than water. When we sold the cattle and the second lot of hogs, I managed to pay the bank off. We didn’t butcher hogs or cattle this year because we had about two freezers full and a third with chickens.

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The gold and silver I bought for \$525 and \$10 had doubled in value and almost kept up with inflation. Fuel was up to almost \$5 for diesel and \$4 for gas. We did minimal tilling this year in an effort to cut costs. Jimbo recommended gelding the colts at six months

and having the vet perform the maintenance semi-annually. Or, he said, Jim could do the maintenance. We decided to try extracting the oil from the soybeans and feed the meal because I could add the biodiesel to the tank and over a period of time, blend it in.

I had to buy a tank to hold the biodiesel because the large tank was almost full. I got around 60bu/acre on the soybeans which translated into about 60gpa. The biodiesel yield was about 80% of that or 48gpa and I had 240 acres of soybeans. We only converted 80 acres to oil and we got about 3,800 gallons of biodiesel. The cattle love soybean meal.

“I didn’t plan that very well.”

“Plan what?”

“We’ve had the equipment to produce biodiesel for several years. I put in a 40,000-gallon diesel tank then spent \$75,000 to get it filled. We don’t use that much diesel fuel on the farm, including my pickup. Your car and my Jeep both burn gas. We can also produce ethanol and I could blend E85 if the vehicles would run on it. Your car isn’t flex fuel and I’m not sure how to convert the Jeep. The five hundred gallons of gas could be used to produce 2,200 gallons of E85.”

“Can’t you look it up on the web?”

“I’ll try.”

“There’s a mechanic in Bethany that does the ethanol conversions.”

“Why didn’t you tell me, honey, I found the answer?”

“I didn’t know about it when we talked. Mom told me.”

“Do you have any idea how much he charges?”

“About \$150, but he guarantees his work and you get back the parts to run on gasoline.”

“We have the ethanol permit from ATF.”

“Jim said you and he produced a batch.”

“It’s in a keg aging. I also have some that Dad and I made that’s about 6 years old.”

“What did you do with the biodiesel you produced?”

“I added it to the big tank.”

“Where did you get the equipment?”

“The still or the biodiesel equipment?”

“The biodiesel equipment.”

“That came from Utah Biodiesel Supply.”

“The still?”

“Homemade from a kit we got from the utility free. It’s a 3” column still.”

“What did you do with the mash from producing the ethanol? Have you tasted that whiskey you made?”

“I dried the mash and fed it to the cattle. I haven’t tasted the whiskey since October of 2006.”

“Don’t you think you should see if it’s ready to bottle?”

“I’ll draw off a little tonight and we can both taste it.”

o

“You should probably cut that, but it’s good.”

“It is good, Karen. I don’t have a lot of bottles so I think I’ll just bottle it at this strength. We can cut it when we mix a drink.”

“I won’t be drinking for a while.”

“Why not?”

“We are expecting.”

“Are we expecting a boy or a girl?”

“Yes.”

“I have Guard this weekend or I’d take you to Des Moines to celebrate.”

“Des Moines will still be there the following weekend.”

The National Guard still serves *one weekend a month, two weeks a year* excluding call-ups. Because of Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, National Guard soldiers were averaging much more time in uniform. I was just at the point where I had been home 24-months and could be called up again in October.

I asked my First Sergeant if he'd heard anything about a possible call up. He hadn't, but wondered why I was asking. I explained, again, that I'd recently married and we were expecting. I said that I didn't want to see my wife in the same position as Danny Sesser's fiancée. He said he just didn't know, but he hadn't heard any rumblings. The President was downsizing.

The first deployment was on an all-volunteer basis. They asked for volunteers, you raised your hand and they cut the orders. We'd endured 4 months of training at Ft. Lewis and then had shipped out with only a 4 day pass in between. Downsizing or not, they were turning over troops because those deployed for a year or more were coming home.

I'm as patriotic as the next guy and I don't see myself as being cowardly. I'd done my time and didn't want to go back to that forsaken place. And, we were expecting and I really needed/wanted to stay home. If I had to go, Jim was going to have to take over all of the farming and maybe hire a second hired hand.

We had those floods this year and the expected Iowa corn and soybean crops were expected to be down as much as 20%. My fields looked good and we might get a bumper crop. Two hundred and forty acres of corn at 175 bushels per acre at a price of \$7.50 sounded awful good (market value \$315,000). Even producing biodiesel and ethanol and putting up corn and beans for the livestock, we ended up with a lot of corn and soybeans to sell.

I told you it was a full section and just explained that we had 400 acres in beans and corn. I had 60 acres of alfalfa hay, 80 acres of oats and 100 acres that was too hilly to farm. That was a permanent pasture and included the homestead plus the shooting range. The most concise description I can make of the area would be Billy goat country. I didn't have topo map software and didn't need it. If you have it, look in the area of the Iowa/Missouri line about 3 miles east of I-35.

"I saw that."

"Saw what?"

"Where you admitted there was something you didn't have."

"It doesn't matter what I don't have, it matters much more what I do have."

"For instance?"

"The most beautiful wife in the world."

"You're on a roll, don't stop now."

“I don’t want you to get a big head. Do you know where you want to go this coming weekend?”

“I checked it out, we have several choices. There’s Vern’s on Hickman Road in Clive, J. Benjamin’s on Franklin Avenue Des Moines, Riverwalk Café at the Des Moines Botanical Center, Dolce Vita Grill and Vineyard on University Avenue, Mojo’s in Johnston, The Big Steer in Altoona, Mosaix Restaurant in West Des Moines, Cosi Cucina Italian Grill in Clive, Jimmy’s American Café in West Des Moines, Trostel’s Greenbriar Restaurant in Merle Hay Mall, Chuck’s Italian American Restaurant in Des Moines, Tursi’s Latin King in East Des Moines, Turnea and Sons at the I-Cub Stadium, Jesse’s Embers in Des Moines and Chef’s Kitchen on Beaver Avenue in Des Moines.”

“Where did you learn all that?”

“From a website.”

“You read reviews of those restaurants?”

“Every one.”

“Then it seems appropriate that you choose Karen. We’re celebrating your pregnancy.”

“I still have that Sexy Little Things Lace peek-a-boo babydoll.”

“That’s what got this started. Okay, but let’s just get the King sized bed.”

Karen gave me a strange look before she realized that I was referring to the night she bought the outfit from Victoria’s Secret. I had eaten at Chuck’s several times and it was good and a landmark but nothing exceptional. I let her choose because she’d read the reviews and knew what I liked and disliked. That’s always a part of getting to know each other. Fortunately, in this case, our tastes were similar and a good steak, good seafood or even a really good tenderloin sandwich would put smiles on our faces. When it came to hamburger, I really liked the Maid-Rites.

I offered Jill and her husband – they finally got married – a place in the new shelter and she basically told me off, before she hung up. I made the same offer to Uncle John and Aunt Shirley and he was actually interested. Next I had called Jack and offered him the tour, but made sure to leave the basement door open. He came over with his wife and they were very interested. He wanted to know what he could do to contribute to the preparations. I told him they could start stocking food, canning supplies, seed and weapons that he wanted that Karen and I didn’t have. His wife, Rachael, said they’d get AR15s and Beretta 92F pistols. I told them not to forget ammo, I didn’t have those calibers.

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 7

Karen got Jim to do the chores and we left early. I wanted to pick up the final M1911 from Smith because he called and was holding it for us. He told me that he had found a pallet of the South African but he was following the market and it was up to about \$60 per battle pack. Even with 14 rifles (our 8 and Jimbo's 6) shooting the 7.62 NATO, we'd never run out of ammo. He also had the Leupold scopes and A.R.M.S. mounts (about time).

"How much did you pay for the South African?"

"About 16 cents a round, delivered."

"I paid 19 cents plus freight."

"I'll give you 25 cents a round if you'll deliver it."

"So you can turn around and sell it for 43 cents a round?"

"A man has to make a living."

"I helped about all we can afford."

"She has the glow, are you expecting?"

"She is, but I'm not."

I paid for the purchases that I hoped ended my long gun buying spree. It was getting towards lunch time and I was hungry.

"I'm hungry and would like to get either a pork tenderloin or a Maid Rite sandwich."

"We'll be here for two days, so we can do both. How about a Maid Rite today and a pork tenderloin tomorrow?"

"If we can find pork tenderloins, I wouldn't mind putting some in one of the freezers."

"I'm sure that someone must make them. I can't believe that every restaurant makes their own. We'll ask around and if the restaurant we eat at tomorrow has really good ones, maybe they will sell us some."

"Have you decided about dinner yet?"

"I've narrowed it down to two places; I'll let you know. Care to eat and spend half a day at the Living History Farms?"

“You bet. We can pick up ideas about how it was done before all of the modern equipment and conveniences.”

“I can see where it would be interesting from a historical perspective, but why would you care how they used to do it?”

“You know that I read a lot of the stories Derek’s dad wrote. He seems convinced that we’re 30 minutes away from WW III. From what I’ve read, he was apparently in the Air Force during the Cuban Missile Crisis. SAC parked about a dozen B-47s on their flight line, loaded with nukes. It’s just possible that he could be right.”

“Is that what prompted you to build the shelter?”

“I’d be lying if I claimed it didn’t influence me. I can’t outright say that was the reason; nonetheless, I considered what he was saying carefully.”

“Let me guess, he has a Super Match.”

“No, he has the Loaded and wants a Super Match. He lives somewhere in California and they can’t own .50-caliber rifles out there. He wants one, but I have the distinct impression he couldn’t afford one if they could have them.”

“But he has a Mossberg 590A1 and a P-14, right?”

“Yes to the Mossberg, but no to the P-14. He settled for a Taurus PT1911.”

“There’s a Maid Rite right there.”

“California has about the most restrictive gun laws in the country. Reading between the lines, he bought 20-round magazines for his M1A and had them shipped to Derek and Derek forwarded them. The Taurus is also illegal in California, but Derek bought it and his older brother took it to their dad.”

“Why are they illegal?”

“I think that Taurus doesn’t want to play their Mickey Mouse games.”

“Take your order?”

“Karen?”

“I’ll have a Maid Rite and fries.”

“I’ll have two Maid Rites with pickles and fries.”

“Why did you order pickles?”

“Because if you order it that way, they put them on the bottom and I’ll add the ketchup to the top.”

“What do you eat on your pork tenderloins?”

“Mustard and pickles.”

“Hey, look at the menu.”

“What do you see?”

“Pork tenderloins.”

“I think I’ll get one of those to go, I might get hungry at Living History Farms.”

“On top of 2 Maid Rites and fries? You’re going to get fat.”

“I hate to keep bringing up Derek’s dad, but in one of his stories he mentioned being fat as a kid and going on a diet during his senior year in high school. He did it by eating Maid Rite sandwiches.”

We finished eating and headed for Living History Farms in West Des Moines. On the way, I got us the room with the king size bed at the Holiday Inn. I managed to down the tenderloin before it got cold. Once at the Farms, Karen and I had slightly different agendas. Her interest was viewing the exhibits from the perspective of a History teacher, while I was thinking ahead and trying to figure out how we’d farm a section using only horses.

I concluded it would be nearly impossible to farm more than a ¼ section using horses, even if we had all of the horse drawn implements. It would take draft horses, not saddle horses and they hadn’t manufactured much of the horse drawn equipment for several decades. The Amish didn’t use tractors and they got by, maybe I should make the buggy trip to Lamoni.

Karen selected Chuck’s Italian American Restaurant for dinner. I like their onion rings and we had a quiet, enjoyable meal. After dinner, we returned to the motel because it had been a long day. We showered and started watching a movie on TV. We turned off the TV shortly and were asleep within an hour. The following morning, we had breakfast at the motel and I asked how she wanted to spend her day.

“Will, I went through our supplies and we need a few things from Costco.”

“They don’t open until noon on Sunday.”

“I know how we can kill some time.”



We arrived at Costco just as they were opening and we only got a cart and a trolley of goods this trip. Our next stop was Maid Rite for the tenderloins.

“Could I speak to the manager?”

“Is there a problem, sir?”

“Oh no, not at all, I wanted to ask him or her a question.”

“You asked for me?”

“Do you make your tenderloins here or do they come in a box?”

“Is there something wrong with your tenderloin?”

“Quite the opposite, I like to buy a box or two of the tenderloins, they’re really good and we live a long way from a Maid Rite.”

“I’d have to check our inventory, I’ll be right back.”

“We can spare three boxes.”

“We’ll take them, thank you.”

“How are we going to get them home?”

“I put the cooler in the back; all we need to do is buy some ice.”

We were about halfway home when I had a thought.

“Damn.”

“What?”

“They must get the Maid Rite meat in a box, I should have asked about that.”

“I can almost duplicate it, Will. I think it’s basically ground beef and onions. It might not be exactly the same, but it should be close enough until we go back to Des Moines again.”

“Did you enjoy Living History Farms?”

“I had a good time and it was informative, how about you?”

“I was looking how they farmed before the advent of modern equipment. It was informative and discouraging. Even with draft horses and horse drawn equipment, I doubt we could farm more than a quarter of the farm.”

“Why would you be thinking about something like that? Oh, WW III, again?”

“I think we’d better stock up on parts for the John Deere and the equipment. We shouldn’t need a lot and we can produce our own fuel.”

“What happens if they want you to go back to Iraq?”

“I won’t volunteer like I did the last time. I asked the First Sergeant and he said he hadn’t heard anything about a possible second deployment. If I get orders before my enlistment is up, I have to go.”

“How long is your enlistment?”

“Eight years; 2 active duty and 6 years in the National Guard. I joined before I started college and spent the summer in boot camp. When I finished active duty, I started college and just graduated when I went to Iraq, as a member of the Guard. I have about a year left on my enlistment. I’m in C troop, 1<sup>st</sup> of the 113<sup>th</sup>.”

“The time frame doesn’t quite make sense.”

“I finished college in 3 years by going full time, including summers.”

“Still, if you joined when you were 18, and your enlistment was for eight years, you should have finished your enlistment.”

“Crap, you’re right. That’s why I got the reenlistment talk last weekend. I’ll be out in 1 month.”

“You’re not going to reenlist?”

“I’ve had my turn and learned all the soldiering I need.”

o

Apparently I was concentrating on winning the hand of the gorgeous lady in the seat beside me and lost track of time. I don’t know how that happened; most soldiers can tell you the month, day and minute their enlistment expires. One more weekend and I’ll be out!

“I think I go have a talk with that Amish breeder and find out a little about draft horses.”

“Won’t they be expensive?”

“Probably; I don’t really see money as being the main problem. You know that I’m not really a horseman and when it comes to the big horses, I’m a total idiot. I’m lucky if I can get the harness on correctly to pull the buggy or wagon. We’d have to do something to protect the livestock if we did have a war.”

“Any ideas?”

“Not really.”

“Maybe you should talk to Daddy.”

“I’ll call when we get home.”

“Jimbo? Will. I have a question, if you have a minute.”

“Have a good time in Des Moines?”

“Yes we did. We went to Living History Farms.”

“And, you saw their horse operation and want to know about horse farming, right?”

“Am I that transparent?”

“Not at all. However, considering the steps you’ve taken over the last couple of years to prep, it seems like the logical next step for a farmer. I don’t know much about horse farming because it was before my time. We need to talk to that Amish horse breeder.”

“I have a fair amount of livestock; do you have any ideas how we could protect them from, say, radioactive fallout?”

“That would take a fairly large underground shelter. You’d need to be able to segregate the cattle, hogs, horses and chickens.”

“How big of a shelter?”

“Probably as big as your barn, if not larger.”

“We couldn’t do something with the barn?”

“I suppose you could cover it in concrete and earth. Either way, it wouldn’t be cheap. You have, on average, 90 head of cattle, 30 sows and 390 feeder pigs, 11 horses and around a hundred or more chickens. Make that 15 horses if you buy a team or two of draft horses. Your best bet might be to do something with the barn.”

“Let me know when you’re free to go to Lamoni.”

“I’m free tomorrow.”

“I’ll be here.”

o

“Ah English, a problem with the horses?”

“Not at all. We’re looking for an education on draft horses and possibly to buy them.”

“What breed?”

“What do you have?”

“Belgians. I have two teams of 3 year olds that are trained to harness. You can’t really work them for another year. I’d make you a package deal, \$8,000.”

“\$6,000.”

“\$7,200 and I’ll include the harness.”

“Is that a good deal?”

“It’s about what you’d pay at an auction and not get the harness. What do you have in the way of horse drawn implements?”

“Nothing.”

“You’ll need a plow, a straight disc, you can use the drag you have, a planter and a combine. You’ll want more wagons and we can build them for you. So, you want to farm the old way?”

“I’d like to be able to, should the need arise.”

“If you wish, I’ll gather up the equipment, but you will have to provide your own transport. A large horse trailer will transport the Belgians.”

“Jim?”

“Not a bad price for draft horses. I have a horse trailer. I say go for it.”

“English, except for the wagons, the equipment won’t be new, but will be serviceable.”

“We’ll be back in two hours or so and I’ll pay cash. How long to find the equipment?”

“It will take a few weeks. Do you want pneumatic tires or the old fashioned tires on the wagons?”

“Pneumatic if it isn’t a problem.”

We picked up the horses and the harnesses later in the day. The barn was filling up and starting to fall apart. Maybe my next major expenditure should be to replace the barn and make it large enough to house all of the livestock, including the chickens. I started toying with the idea of a concrete barn built with double walls and dirt between the walls. That should stop any radiation. Next there was the issue of providing them with filtered air. Feed could be stored in the loft. Air – shelter – water – food. And, a place to store manure until the barn was opened.

This was going to be a major expense, probably triple the cost of the shelter. We’d have to put in either a metal or concrete culvert connecting the shelter to the barn. This was way beyond anything Roy and his crew could handle, I’d need a regular contractor. It wasn’t really hard to estimate the concrete if you knew the dimensions. I started making assumptions, 10,000ft<sup>2</sup> building (100’x100’), 6” thick and 20’ high, plus three slabs of 10,000ft<sup>2</sup> each. 520 yards of concrete at \$75 a yard = \$39,000. Installed, probably double that. That didn’t consider the dirt fill, the air system, homemade vault style doors, moving the milking equipment and repairs as needed. Maybe \$150-\$175 thousand when it was all said and done.

“I’ve been looking at plans to replace the barn.”

“It is starting to come apart. “What did you have in mind?”

“A concrete barn. At the moment, there’s no way we could pay the full cash price, we’d come up short about \$80 thousand. However, I believe we could get a bank loan and have it paid off in one year or two at the most.”

“With all the supplies we’ve accumulated, we could go years without a single bill, except for electricity, seed and fertilizer.”

“Are you saying to go ahead?”

“I think so, but you might want to run it by Daddy.”

o

“So, Jimbo, that’s my solution to protecting the livestock. Karen suggested that I run it by you.”

“How much of the cost can you come up with now?”

“At least 50%.”

“Cash?”

“Cash.”

“You’ve have a couple of good years, run it by your banker and see what he thinks.”

“He’ll think I’m crazy.”

“Probably. But he will have a mortgage on the farm until it’s paid for so he’ll probably make the loan.”

I got a line of credit for \$100,000, to draw down as the money was needed to build the barn. I found a contractor willing to do most of the work, excluding putting in the dirt fill, because it was labor intensive. I decided on 4 AV-300 systems for air and the first step was to put in the concrete culvert connecting the shelter to the barn. We emptied the livestock out and fortunately all but one cow was dry. I also sold another lot of hogs and banked the money, further reducing the amount I would have to draw on the line of credit.

Jim and I removed the milking equipment and stored it in the machine shed. The contractor razed the barn and began construction. Jim and I we busy hauling dirt from various sites around the farm to provide the dirt fill. The contractor actually had the building up in short order and held off putting on the roof so we could add the dirt fill. I’m sure he must have thought I was nuts.

It took Jim and me a month to complete the dirt fill and compact it. The contractor returned and added the roof. We added 6’ of dirt on top of that and planted grass seed to hold the soil in place. It was about the weirdest barn you ever saw; a 10,000ft<sup>2</sup> building 20’ tall with 6’ of soil on top. The electrician wired the place and we reinstalled stalls and milking equipment, making those repairs I talked about. Jimbo help us build various pens and the barn was good to go. We installed a fenced in area on one side for the chickens and when we got the new crop; they’d live in the barn. I only drew \$60,000 on the line of credit.

I had attended my last weekend drill and had received my discharge papers in the mail. Karen began to show about her fourth month and it looked to me like she had a basketball team growing in there. We sold hogs in the spring and I repaid all but \$10,000 of the line of credit. I could have paid it all, but we needed operating capital.

I’m not going to comment on the outcome of the election, I get angry just thinking about it. But, he’d have to find them before he could take them away. Inflation continued its upward spiral and fuels and food became almost prohibitively expensive. We were producing ethanol and biodiesel continuously. We had the Jeep and her car converted to run on pure ethanol, anhydrous alcohol.

The doctor detected two heartbeats and we had to decide on names. Not knowing whether the babies were boys or girls, we picked William and James and Karen and Jillian. The names ended up being William, James and Karen, and she said she wasn't sure she wanted to do that again. The boys were identical and the girl was fraternal, according to the doctor. The odds of triplets were 1:6,400 for a woman over 35 and rarer for a woman Karen's age. If God had wanted a woman to have triplets, He would have given her three arms and three spigots. Nobody starved, but it was a challenge. Karen had taken Maternity leave from school and wouldn't be returning until the fall (2009). Susan claimed child care would eat us alive and volunteered to care for her grandchildren.

I had to make a trip to Des Moines on my own and pick up more diapers and baby clothes. I stopped by Smith's on the way out of town and told him I'd take three Mini-14s. I also told him I needed about 15,000 rounds of M193 on strippers and to ship it.

"Why three rifles?"

"We had triplets."

"What are their names?"

"William, James and Karen."

"You'll want 30-round magazines; I throw in a couple for each baby and the stripper guides. Fifteen thousand rounds?"

"Yes. Why don't you drop ship it and I'll mail you a check?"

"I had the distinct impression you didn't like the .223."

"I don't like the M16, M4 or AR15. The Mini is just a scaled down M1A."

"Anything else?"

"Not that you can get."

"You'd be surprised what I can get."

"Two Surefire FA762S."

"Two grand apiece, cash only and no paperwork. Free installation of the adapters."

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 8

“I’m not complaining, but isn’t that a bit steep?”

“Not considering Iowa law.”

“No sales tax right?”

“Right. I’m Smith, so you must be Jones.” (He explained that he was referring to an old TV show, *Alias Smith and Jones*)

“Don’t suppose you have any of the fun stuff, do you?”

“You’re in the Guard, get it yourself.”

“I’m out. Did my eight and called it quits.”

“You could make a trip to El Salvador and buy them on a street corner for about \$3 each.”

“But how would I get them back into the country?”

“One of those border tunnels, probably. If I hear of anything, I could keep you in mind. How many were you looking for?”

“Maybe 150.”

“Jeez. They’d lock you up and melt the key. If I could find them, they’d be drop shipped and I’d be paid up front.”

“Give me a call when you do.”

o

“I bought all the cotton diapers they had and a bunch of diaper pins. I got those baby shirts you wanted and those sleepers and gowns.”

“What else did you get?”

“I got them their first rifles.”

“Will!”

“Not for now, for later. I also order 18 cases of 5.56 for the rifles and got 13 magazines per. Smith is getting some other things for us, but they’ll take a while.”



“What?”

“Suppressors for the Super Match rifles, for example.”

“They’re illegal in Iowa, but they sort of make sense. What else?”

“Just a gross of M61s.”

She didn’t know what I was talking about and I didn’t offer to explain. Never volunteer! Surefire appealed to me was their durability. Surefire hadn’t been able to wear one out, or so they claimed.

o

“So, how are you going to protect the animals?”

“I’ll put a double blast door on each entrance Jimbo. Double double, inside and outside. They’re the same door as the one on the shelter except about twice as wide. Not for the faint of heart, let me tell you. They had to be cast in place and the walls in the door are in had to be 10” thick. It may be ugly, but the animals don’t care and I can pull down the chicken house and erect another storage building.”

“What do you plan to store?”

“Seed and fertilizer, especially fertilizer.”

“What do you think of our new President?”

“Did you vote for him?”

“No, I didn’t vote for him.”

“Neither did I. Someone voted for him, I sure hope they’re happy with what they have.”

“Would it be okay if I stored our HK91s in the shelter?”

“Of course. If they can’t find them, they can’t take them away?”

“Right. I may bring most of our guns and only keep a shotgun and a .22 at home.”

“I have some things coming and Karen knows about them and approves to the extent she understands what they are.”

“What?”

“Two Surefire suppressors for the Super Match rifles and 150 of the M61 hand grenades.”

“There’s no way those grenades could be legal.”

“They’re not. I’m also trying to get some of that Mk 211 MP ammo that the Army uses for sniping.”

“That’s explosive like a grenade, right?”

“Yeah. Can you imagine a \$200 tax stamp on every round? What I’d really like is for them to misplace about 20 cans of the stuff. I have about 3,800 rounds of the A-MAX ammo and should buy more. I still have a small balance on the barn project to pay off so I’m waiting.”

“How much did it end up costing, if I may ask?”

“Around \$180 thousand.”

“You must really love that livestock.”

“If you figure a new wooden barn would have cost as much as \$100,000, it’s a bargain. In the unlikely event we did have a GTW, we have everything we’d need to start over. We have enough food to weather most any nuclear winter, animal power to replace mechanical power, where necessary, and security in spades for all of us.”

“Nonetheless, you seem to be on the fringe of the prepper group.”

“Do I propose the overthrow of the government? Absolutely not, that’s why we have ballot boxes. However, Jefferson thought a revolution was necessary every once in a while. Besides, the Supreme Court cleared up the issue of firearms ownership with  *Heller*.”

“And DC acted less than a month later almost in direct opposition to the decision.”

*“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. – Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, Verse 1.”*

“So, how many grandchildren are you going to bless us with?”

“I initially thought maybe 3 or 4, but not all at once. Karen almost said, never again.”

“You probably have another. In my experience most women go through the birthing process twice before calling it quits.”

"I've stopped buying gas and diesel for now. Jim and I are producing biodiesel and ethanol. Dad got the permit for the still from the ATF."

"I don't suppose you put some in oak casks did you?"

"We did that twice, once about 7 years ago and again right after Jim started working here. Want a sample of the old stuff?"

"Maybe just a little taste."

"Here you go, pour your own. Let me warn you, it wasn't cut."

"Maybe just 2 fingers, then."

I had those big old shot glasses that held almost 3 ounces, like you see in western movies. Two fingers in one of those was a good sized shot.

"Wee doggie, that's stout."

"Karen thought we should dilute it with either water or something like vodka."

"If you could cut it to 100 proof, it might be better. Do you know what proof it is?"

"As far as I know, 180."

"So, if you cut it 50/50 with water, you'd have 90 proof?"

"I think so."

"I'd do it, but only one bottle at a time and I'd probably use distilled water to avoid changing the flavor."

"That bottle is right at half full, shall we try it?"

"Do you have distilled water?"

"A gallon or two."

"Let's try."

"Now, shake it up good to mix the water and the whiskey and then pour me another two fingers."

"Well?"

"Try it, you'll like it."

“I’ll take your word for it Jimbo. Want to take that bottle home?”

“I don’t mind if I do.”

◦

I like a drink, occasionally. I’d prefer to have it with Karen and not her father. She wasn’t drinking because she was still nursing. The whiskey wouldn’t change in the bottle and I could wait until we could sit down and have a drink together. I did replace the bottle of Myer’s Rum and it hasn’t been opened.

I got a phone call and sent a check for \$4,000. About three weeks later, I got a second phone call and was told he’d need a check for \$864. I didn’t ask questions, but when the boxes arrived via freight, I opened one. There were 150 of M61s all right and an assortment of smoke and Mk3A2 concussion grenades. I counted them and they came to \$3 apiece.

I called someone I knew in Supply at Camp Dodge and inquired about Mk 211 MP. He started by shining me on, but finally admitted that they had some, but very little. He said if even one can came up missing, someone would be served his head on a plate. I laughed and told him I wasn’t looking for an ammo can of the stuff, but more like 20 ammo cans.

“How are much you willing to pay?”

“\$2 a round, call it five grand even.”

“This would be hard to do.”

“\$7,500.”

“But not THAT hard. They’re going to be looking for a shipment of explosives that got misplaced and they’ll probably bring in the CID, the FBI and the BATFE.”

“I was thinking cash.”

“Maybe the NCIS and the CIA.”

“Ten thousand and not one penny more.”

“How soon do you want it?”

“Yesterday.”

“The trick to this will be to...”

“I don’t need to know any details, pal. I just want 20 ammo cans of Mk 211 MP sitting in my front yard so I can give the deliveryman ten grand in cash.”

It would be cheap at \$15,000. The government pays about \$7.50 per round. Hell, Barrett M33 costs \$4.25 a round and A-MAX over \$5 a round. By insisting that he deliver it personally, I made us into co-conspirators. I was getting upset with how things were going in 2009 and was a bit more willing to take the risk. I’d have him unload it onto a trolley and a minute later, it would be behind the basement wall. Let anyone try to prove I had it, unless they had it on video.

Perhaps I was being played for a fool, but I didn’t believe this guy was bright enough to do that as quickly as he responded. The phone call only lasted about three minutes. And melt the key, huh? I’d once heard someone say, *what you need to do is get a \$3 bottle of wine and a cheap piece of ass and reevaluate yourself.*

Don’t look back; they may be gaining on you. Who are they? Take your pick. I had to talk to Karen.

“Do you think we should pay off the bank and have the farm free and clear?”

“How much do we owe?”

“Around ten thousand.”

“And how much cash do we have in reserve?”

“Around twenty-five thousand, but I’ve committed ten thousand of that.”

“Do you have the seed and fertilizer?”

“Yes.”

“Do it, being out of debt is always preferable and you have the gold and silver.”

“I didn’t tell you about that.”

“I was looking around and discovered it. You really should put it in the shelter.”

“I will. We have the suppressors and the M61s. I have to go to Des Moines to get the adapters installed.”

“How long will that take?”

“If I leave early and get there by the time Smith opens, I should be home early.”

“Stop by Maid Rite and get some of their ground beef and more tenderloins if they have them.”

I was under the impression that Maid Rite Corporation pre-cooked the beef. They pre-seasoned it, but didn't pre-cook it. When you think about it, it made sense. It came in 5-pound boxes, or that's what was available. I got 4 boxes and two more boxes of tenderloins, after I ate. It hadn't taken long to install the adapters because he had the right tools. He had the bill for the 5.56 ammo that he said was in transit via motor freight. I had forgotten about that and had to write a check for \$7,200. I guess the bank would have to wait.

“I got 4 boxes of Maid Rite meat, but it's uncooked. I also got two boxes of tenderloins. When I was talking to you about paying off the bank, I forgot about the 5.56 ammo I ordered.”

“Jim put it in the basement, it came today.”

“Good. The bank is going to have to wait until we sell cattle. That should be in about a month to six weeks. The hogs won't be finished for at least two months. I did want to put up a storage building to store seed and fertilizer, but that will have to wait too.”

“What are we going to do with the frozen Maid Rite meat?”

“How about getting a grocery store to use their meat saw to cut it into one pound chunks? We can double wrap it and put it in the freezer.”

“I was going to go down to mom's tomorrow, why don't you take me and go to Hy-Vee in Bethany and have them cut it for you?”

“Okay, but I don't like going in there because of Jill.”

“She's your sister. You can't change that any more than you can change her attitude.”

“I really didn't appreciate what she said to you.”

“Get over it, I have.”

“And then when I tried to make things right and invited her and her husband to use the shelter, she told me off and hung up.”

“If the need arises, she will probably show up with her husband and his family.”

“We might not have room. Well, I mean we might not have enough beds.”

“Pick up some air mattresses at Wal-Mart in Bethany.”

“How many?”

“Get a dozen, just to be safe.”

I also had to stop at the bank the next day and get out ten thousand in cash to hold for the ammo I was hoping would turn up. Jill actually said Hi, I can't believe it. She was busy checking someone out and couldn't talk, so I just returned the greeting. I found the meat department manager and explained what I wanted. He said seeing it was for a member of the family, no problem. They'd use a ruler and would preset the saw. It would be close, but no guarantee. I guess close counts in horseshoes, hand grenades, dancing and sawing meat.

I was thinking about skipping the air mattresses, but after I went to the bank, I went to Wal-Mart and got 12. They were the Coleman Twin Sized Flocked Air Bed and I bought some generic brand air pump they carried. I spent less than \$300. If trouble came, we'd have to move the kids' cribs to the shelter. It didn't make much sense to have duplicates of something you'd only use for a year or two, except for firearms.

Speaking of which, I got the scopes mounted and both rifles sighted in. The one I used was sighted in 600 meters but I only sighted Karen's in to 100-meters. I thought it better to allow her the opportunity to sight her rifle in herself. About two days later, a pickup pulled in, a man got out (my pal) and he started unloading ammo cans. I grabbed the wad of cash and the trolley. I started stacking the cans on the trolley and there were sure enough twenty. I handed him the ten grand and said *Count if you want to*. He took off after stuffing the cash in a pocket and never looked back. I rushed the ammo to the tunnel and closed the door.

Nobody showed up later with an arrest warrant, a video tape or anything so I presumed we were home free. It would later turn out that I was and he wasn't, but they couldn't prove anything. Suspicion can really serve to ruin an Army career. However, the order was not submitted from his computer but from an extra that everyone used. Some guys just must be born lucky, I was. Twelve months in Iraq without a scratch and I have the most gorgeous wife in the world. Plus, we have 3 children in our first year of marriage; kind of cute too, for babies. You oh and you ah and then you end up changing a few poopy diapers and you suddenly get a slightly different perspective.

My pal didn't get caught because he knew not to spend the money right away. Those feds look at the darnest things, including your spending patterns. If an Army Sergeant who makes yea so much a month suddenly starts spending money like he's an E-9, he's waiving a red flag that says, *catch me, I did it*.

o

The farm was a real money producer, but you couldn't tell it by looking at our bank account. I filed quarterly estimated tax returns so we didn't get caught on April 15<sup>th</sup> owing all the money the spring hogs would bring. I was happy, Karen was tired but happy and

in our spare time, Jim and I were tearing down the hen house. While I sure hope our house doesn't catch fire, at least I won't be in the same condition as that fella in California. I have more ammo than he had and probably way more explosives. He had about 50# of gunpowder. I haven't added it up, but we have more than 100,000 rounds of ammo, almost 300 assorted hand grenades and 20 cans of Mk 211 MP, the best .50-caliber sniper ammo in the world.

It was about time I settled down and started to take my responsibilities seriously. We were coming up on planting season 2010, I hated the President more each day, I needed to get the bank paid off, build the storage building and stock it. It would be nice to have some cash in the bank, too. I wouldn't mind having a little cash at home in case a whim strikes and Karen I just want to take off for a weekend. Susan and Jimbo would take care of the kids in a heartbeat and spoil them rotten, that's what grandparents do best.

I was fairly sure that Susan would go in with us again this year on the garden, which had worked well in the past. I asked Karen about jars and lids and she said she already ordered them. She had also ordered additional heirloom seeds for the garden so when she used the current batch of seeds, she would still have a full supply and wouldn't need to harvest seeds. She said Susan and she were going to try a new pasta sauce recipe this year using the Roma tomatoes and a different spice blend.

With the completion of the storage building and acquisition of seeds and fertilizer, our preparations would be nearly complete. From that point forward, we'd switch into a maintenance mode of maintaining our stocks. I had been increasing the herd of breeding sows and decided to do the same with the cattle, five per year. With as much permanent pasture as we had, there was ample grazing. Jim and I completed planting and began a project to improve the fenced lots near the barn. There's always something to be done on a farm.

We had an exceptional crop this year, despite a shortage of water. Karen and I had a grain surplus which was sold off to retire the bank loan. It allowed for the construction of the storage building and acquisition of fertilizer and seed. I bought two kinds of soybean and corn seeds, hybrids and heirlooms. The hybrid purchases were planned around planting 240 acres each of corn and soybeans, while the heirloom seeds we planned around planting 80 acres each of corn and beans. Yes, I bought oat seed, I didn't mention it. There was room inside the new building to store the horse drawn equipment, excluding the combine. I didn't buy a combine because we already had Dad's old pull type combine and there was ample fuel for the tractor to use it to harvest the crops.

"Well, finally. The bank is paid off, the new storage building is up and stocked. We had excellent production from the garden and we finally have some money in the bank."

"I wouldn't do that Will."

"Wouldn't do what?"



“Keep much money in the bank. I read today of three more bank failures. You may want to consider keeping it here, in cash.”

“We don’t have a safe honey.”

“Well, buy one of those cheap fire safes from Costco and keep the safe in the gun closet in the shelter.”

“That cup is about to run over. With the number of firearms we ended up acquiring, there’s no room for most of the ammo and I had to transfer it to the tunnel. There’s room under the radio table for a small safe.”

“I could use a weekend off. How about we spend the weekend in Des Moines? Mom said she’d watch the kids. We need to shop for kids’ clothes too, so it won’t be all pleasure. You can go talk to Smith while I’m shopping and let him talk you into more guns.”

“I’ll call the bank manager and ask him to order the cash. Otherwise, they limit you to either \$5,000 or \$10,000, depending on their available cash.”

“How much is left after erecting the building and stocking it?”

“A shade over fifty.”

“Let them keep the shade and bring home the fifty. There’s one other thing I need to mention, we’re pregnant again.”

“Your father said that would happen. What do you want, a boy or girl?”

“I want a healthy baby, but a girl would be nice to round out the set. I may have a tubal if the baby is okay. They do a belly button procedure before you leave the hospital.”

“Have you those about names?”

“Jillian if we have a girl, no idea if we have a boy.”

We’d essentially used up the family names if we had a boy and I didn’t plan to name a baby after my father, Clarence. I wanted something that could be shortened and produce a good nickname, like Don for Donald, Sam for Samuel or Chuck for Charles. I ran those three past Karen and we agreed on Charles. The banker wasn’t happy that we were pulling 90% of the cash from both our personal and corporate accounts. I left enough in to make the quarterly IRS payments

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 9

When we arrived in Des Moines on Saturday morning, I gave Karen a grand and told her not to spend it all in one place. She said to be back in an hour so she could go to a second store. I headed for Smith's.

"Is Smith here?"

"The business changed hands."

"I've bought a fair number of firearms from this shop."

"I recognize you and Smith mentioned you in passing. You pay cash and expect a 5% discount for cash, right?"

"That's me, all right. I'm looking for another Mini-14 and 4 Beretta 92FS."

"Unless I miss my guess, you'll want 5,000-rounds of M193 on strippers, and both FMJ and Gold Dot for the pistols; five magazines per pistol and 13 30-round magazines for the rifle?"

"What did he do, write it down?"

"He sure did."

"The pistol ammo will be 1,000-rounds of Lawman and 1,000-rounds of Gold Dot per pistol."

"Why don't I sell you the rifle and two pistols today and order the ammo? When you come to pick up the ammo, I can sell you the other two pistols and we won't have to mess with a 3310.4."

"Are you going to give me 5% for cash?"

"Yes I am. Allow two weeks for the ammo to come in and I'll set aside the other two Berettas. Smith is still around; he just sold out so he could spend more time concentrating on his preps. Anyway, he left me with a list of about 12 customers who are advanced preppers, like you. He didn't give me many details, but he said you had the best setup he'd seen in Iowa. I think the exact term he used was anything short of a direct hit. What did he mean by that?"

"My shelter is under a hill and covered with at least 50' of soil. I needed to replace my barn and built the new one out of two layers of concrete with compacted soil between the inner and outer walls. We've combined all of our livestock into the single building, including the horses, cattle, hogs and chickens."

“Plus you’ve bought a lot of firearms.”

“And ammo. It’s one of those things you can never have too much of. There’s the completed 4473. Give me some extras and I’ll fill them out at home whenever I want to buy another firearm.”

“Any idea what you might want?”

“Four original model Vaqueros with 5½” barrels.”

“I’ve got them. Want me to set them aside?”

“Do that. Order me 8 cases of the Winchester cowboy ammo and ten of the Buffalo Bore.”

“He made a list of your purchases. Well, most of them. He said he sold you some things that weren’t on the list and wouldn’t say what that was.” (Thank you Smith)

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“Sorry I took so long, I picked up a couple of items.”

“I got clothing for the kids in 4 sizes and went a bit overboard so I’ll need a little more cash. Prices are through the roof.”

“Will ten more Ben Franklins be enough?”

“More than enough. By the way, with three kids and a fourth on the way, I’m not going back to teaching.”

“But, you love teaching.”

“Maybe I can home school our children. I have teaching credentials.”

Karen shopped until we both dropped. We got lunch at a Maid Rite and had dinner at Chuck’s. I told her what I had purchased at the gun store and she said her father and mother were planning on giving the kids Winchester rifles. She suggested we get four of the John Wayne rigs with an assortment of belt lengths. I told her I’d have to come back in two weeks and she told me she’d come too.

She went on to explain that she liked the shoulder holster rig that Don Johnson had made famous on Miami Vice. She wanted one of those with a Browning Hi-Power. I called the gun store and explained what we wanted and told him I’d take two. The rig was originally called the Jackass rig and was made by Galco International. He told me that their catalog didn’t include what they now called the Miami Classic rig for a Browning Hi-Power. Did I want him to call them and see if they could produce them?

He called back and said their custom shop would make them and did we want black or tan? I told him tan and he said to wait to come up until the leather was in. I told him we were only going to make one trip, 3310.4 notwithstanding. He'd better get in an extra 2,000 rounds each of 124gr Lawman and 124gr +P Gold Dot.

It finally came together a month later and we drove to Des Moines to pick up the ammo, leather and hand guns. I'd solved the problem with the John Wayne rigs by using Kirkpatrick leather as a source. By this time, we had a large fortune tied up in firearms and ammo. There was probably more ammo than we could reasonable expect to shoot in a lifetime. We could always unload the SA surplus for about double what it had cost. Firearms were not going down in value.

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Karen had Jillian in the very early spring of 2011. She had all her fingers and toes and the doctor pronounced her 100% healthy. Karen had her belly button procedure before she came home. We had ample moisture and were expecting another good to excellent crop. Jim and I were using the draft horses when we needed to pull a wagon and it was fun.

The price of fuel had continued to climb and the only fuel we bought was gasoline. We were running all of the equipment and vehicles on home produced fuel, ethanol or bio-diesel. When we sometimes had a little ethanol left over, I was adding it to a used charred oak barrel, a big one we'd bought from Jack Daniels. It typically was never more than a gallon or two. I cut it 50/50 with distilled water before I added it.

The summer of 2011 was, to say the least, interesting. We had a huge garden now and Karen and Susan were running 4 canners at once at 15-minute intervals. The basement now had row after row of shelving, all filled with home canned goods. It looked like they could take a year off and only plant potatoes and onions. Jim had taken some of the wages he'd earned from us and gone to a Missouri gun store, returning with a P-14 and a Super Match that had the scope mounted. He borrowed some of the Black Hills ammo to sight it in.

"That's one fine shooting rifle Will."

"How far did you shoot?"

"1,000-yards."

"That's right around 915 meters; try it at 1,000 meters or 1,093 yards."

"You think?"

“Only when I have to. Karen and I have been able to work up to 1,000-meters. With the McMillan, we’re shooting at 2,000-meters, nearly 2,200 yards or about 1¼ miles.”

“Your draft mares and all of the riding mares and fillies have been bred. You’ll have a large string of horses when they all foal. Is the barn big enough?”

“It had better be because I’m not building another.”

“What do you do with all the money you make off of this operation?”

“We keep it mostly in cash. Despite the price, I’m going to turn a portion of it into gold and silver to increase what we have.”

“What’s it running these days?”

“Gold is around \$1,100 and silver around \$20.”

“What are you going to buy?”

“Krugerrands and American Eagles, both gold and silver.”

“Why two different currencies?”

“Not many fractional Krugerrands around. I’ll buy Krugerrands because of the low premium and fractional Eagles plus the one ounce silver Eagles.”

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Nearly every member of C Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> of the 113<sup>th</sup> was trained as a combat lifesaver, including me. I had scrounged around and come up with Mk 1 kits, containing atropine sulfate and pralidoxime chloride. I also had one injector of diazepam for each three MK 1s. We had ordered gas masks, extra filters, Tyvek suits and stuff like that from Approved Gas Masks. I had a good medical cabinet, but it only included things that I had been taught to use. Fortunately, Combat Lifesavers are taught to establish an IV; hence, we had a case of normal saline, a half case each of Ringer’s and D5W.

I had sutures but hoped we never had to use them because suturing is both a skill and an art. We got Cipro, Doxy and Keflex from a Canadian drugstore without a prescription. I had to choose between the various blood stoppers and couldn’t decide, so I bought some of each. There are about 6 kinds out there and new ones keep popping up.

After the grain harvest was done, the final produce harvested from the garden, the excess corn and beans sold off and we had marketed the cattle and hogs, we were sitting on a large amount of cash. Karen I agreed to put 80% of it into gold and silver and keep the remainder in cash.

During early November of 2011, an epidemic broke out in several large cities nearly simultaneously. The CDC got involved immediately and after 6 days had identified the culprit as the Ames strain of anthrax. The Ames strain is the weaponized strain that was involved in the anthrax attack right after 9/11/01, ten years before. However, we weren't guilty. An article from the Washington Post explains:

*In four months, FBI agents and scientists have unraveled many of the mysteries surrounding the strain of anthrax used in last fall's deadly attacks. The Ames strain is now known to be highly virulent, resistant to many vaccines and a perennial favorite of military researchers and bioterrorists.*

*But here's one thing the lethal bug is decidedly not: originally from Ames, Iowa. New details emerging from the infamous bacterium's murky past suggest the Ames strain did not come from the sleepy Iowa college town of the same name, or from anywhere else in Iowa. It was a Texas strain, cultured from a Texas cow, federal officials now say.*

*How it came to be known internationally as the Ames strain is a story of confused labeling and mistaken identity in the Defense Department's two-decade-old quest to find the perfect vaccine to protect troops against a near-perfect killer.*

*It's been a puzzle, said the US Department of Agriculture's Tom Bunn, one of several officials of the agency's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service who have been trying to sort out the strain's true origins since it was first linked to the spate of bioterrorism attacks in Florida, New York and Washington.*

*The Ames strain – one of 89 known genetic varieties of anthrax – was used in each of the attacks on US Senate offices and Florida and New York media companies in September and October. To law enforcement officials, that suggests the attacker had a scientific background and, quite possibly, access to one of a small group of US military research labs and contractors known to possess Ames.*

*The Army acquired the strain in 1981 as part of a national search for novel types of anthrax to use in testing vaccines. It had no name until 1985, when it was described in a scientific paper by researchers at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md.*

*The name Ames was chosen because the researchers believed the strain came from there: The shipping package bore a return address from the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories, an Ames, Iowa, lab that diagnoses illnesses in cattle, according to Gregory Knudson, a former USAMRIID scientist and a co-author of the article that identified the strain. The label stuck.*

*But in the weeks after the anthrax attacks, questions emerged about the strain's origins. The Washington Post filed a request with the USDA under the Freedom of Information Act asking for details about the strain's history. After an exhaustive search, USDA offi-*

*cials in Iowa could find literally nothing: no record of anthrax strains delivered to the Army and no reports of anthrax outbreaks among Iowa cattle in the early 1980s.*

*"When we went back and checked, there was no record of a bacterial culture coming from a cow in Iowa in 1980-81," said Bunn, chief of the USDA's Diagnostic Bacteriology Laboratory. He added: "If the Army asked for something we would have given it to them."*

*A search of long-forgotten Army documents finally resolved the mystery. The strain, it turns out, had come from Texas, which did experience anthrax outbreaks around 1980. The bacteria was isolated by the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostics Laboratory at Texas A&M University and shipped to USAMRIID in May 1981.*

*The germs were mailed in a special container, a package identical to hundreds of others that the USDA supplies to veterinary labs around the country. The return address on the package: The USDA's Veterinary Services Center, Ames, Iowa.*

"I knew it. Sooner or later, someone was going to attack this country."

"I suppose simultaneous outbreaks of anthrax in several cities couldn't be chance, right?"

"Right, but never fear we're covered."

"How?"

"We have both Cipro and Doxy. Either one will stop the anthrax bacillus. If I recall correctly, anthrax can enter the human body through the intestines (ingestion), lungs (inhalation), or skin (cutaneous) and causes distinct clinical symptoms based on its site of entry. Inhalation is likely 100% fatal. We have N-95 disposable masks we can wear, so that shouldn't be a problem. I think we'd better plan on staying home."

"You seem to be taking this casually."

"Well, they aren't shooting at us."

"That's not funny."

"Sorry. However, I've been shot at in Iraq and that's never pleasant. Our Hummer was upgraded from a Ma Deuce to the CROWS and we had extra panels of bullet proof glass in the doors."

"Who did this?"

"I suppose it was terrorists."

“And you don’t believe it was state sponsored?”

“I hadn’t even considered that. I suppose that it’s possible, Karen. Why would you suggest a state sponsor rather than terrorists?”

“I was thinking about the scope of the attacks. What was it, 9 or 10 cities?”

“Yes, 9 or 10, why?”

“And one source speculated that around 300 pounds of anthrax was released in each location.”

“So?”

“So, that’s a ton of a highly specialized and virulent form of anthrax. I read somewhere about the Soviets producing large amounts of anthrax. They had an accident in 1979 at Sverdlovsk that resulted in almost 100 people becoming infected and more than half of them died.”

“I didn’t know about that.”

“It didn’t become public knowledge until 1992. I remember it because it had a 2/3 mortality rate.”

“If it was state sponsored, why would they only have struck 10 cities?”

“For appearances sake. Plus they would have had to use a small, general aviation aircraft. Something like a Cessna or Piper.”

“We’ll put Jim up here and no more travel until this is sorted out.”

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The good news, if there is any, about anthrax is that there is no human-to-human transmission. It is highly resistant to removal, forming spores to encapsulate the bacillus and has been known to survive for 50 years in certain settings. The British tested it in 1942 on Gruinard Island which remained contaminated until 1990.

The cities hit, in order of size, were New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas and San Jose. The first nine had a population in excess of 1,000,000. The Department of Homeland Security and FEMA rushed in response, as did the CDC and USAMRIID. The problem was an absence of hospital beds and respiratory support equipment.

This was the worst attack against the country in history and the MSM was throwing out figures ranging from 100,000 to 50,000,000 dead or dying. In order to prevent the fur-



ther spread of panic, the President invoked an Executive Order clamping down on the media, who immediately filed suit in Federal District Court. By the time the case was heard and ruled on and appealed and ruled on a second time, the issue would be moot. The FCC was instructed to pull the broadcast license of any radio or TV station reporting on the situation and the papers were subject to heavy censorship.

I'm sure that the CID, FBI, BATFE, NCIS and the CIA were otherwise occupied assisting the CDC and the EPA on trying to locate the source of the toxin. The CDC was divided in to six separate agencies. I suspected that the National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases was very busy at the moment, they're charged with dealing with bioterrorism.

"Until this mess is sort out, Karen and I want you to stay here. We're going under self-imposed quarantine. Bring several changes of clothes and anything else you might think is necessary."

"Starting when?"

"Tomorrow, when you show up for work."

"What about the milk pickup?"

"We'll just have to avoid contact with the pickup guy."

"What about heat, winter isn't that far away?"

"I'll order double our usual supply of stoker coal. He won't even have to get off the truck to dump it. Then you and I can shovel it into the coal room."

That's right we still used stoker coal to heat the house. Considering the price of fuel oil, I'm glad Dad never switched over. We'd only needed to make minor repairs over the years, a new bearing, a new furnace grate, etc. It had a large hopper that you filled about 3-4 times a week. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Wood and coal were probably the cheapest form of heat. It was forced air, not a boiler.

Two truckloads filled the coal room with a scant amount remaining. We decided to order 2 additional truckloads, increasing our supply to 20 tons. Jimbo called and said he was sending Susan up, but would remain at home to care for their livestock. "Watch MSM and follow the amateur bands," he suggested.

"Why, Jimbo?"

"I'm not sure Will, but I have a sinking feeling in my gut."

"Would you like to transport your livestock and supplies up here?"

“I’ve thought about it long and hard. I just don’t know if there will be more terrorist attacks.”

“For what it’s worth, Karen isn’t so sure it was terrorists. She expressed a view that the attacks may have had state sponsorship or had been direct actions by an unknown state.”

“When did she express that?”

“Two nights ago.”

“That does it; I’ll start by moving the horses. We do the cattle second and the hogs third. You have any portable chicken coops?”

“No, but Jim and I could probably construct some.”

“Is there room in your basement for our canned food?”

“Maybe; it would be very tight squeeze.”

Can I borrow your pickup and trailer?”

“I send Jim down with it.”

“And, I’ll call that guy in Bethany that moves livestock; he’s the guy you use when you send your beef and hogs to market.”

“That should work; do you have any market ready stock?”

“I could unload about half of what we have; good idea, I hadn’t thought of it. Send Jim down and he can move the canned goods. Do you have lumber and wire for the co-ops?”

“Not on hand, but I can get it and you can move the chickens tomorrow.”

“Won’t be able to move the other livestock except for the saddle horses until I figure out what to sell.”

“I don’t believe it’s quite that urgent, can you get it done in a week?”

“Say, do you have enough room in the house?”

“We do unless Susan and you want separate bedrooms. In that case one of you would have to stay in the shelter.”

“No, we still share the same bed.”

“I’ll send Jim. You’d better get on the phone and get prices for your extra livestock and arrange to sell them.”

“Do you have enough shelving?”

“Fresh out.”

“I’ll have Jim bring up our shelves tied on the top of the load.”

“Do you have that much stuff?”

“You sort of rubbed off on me, but you probably don’t have much more home canned than we do. The potatoes and onions are bagged so they won’t present much of a problem.”

“I could come along and help him load the truck and trailer.”

“I’ll help then; we’ll get saddle horses on the horse trailer. It has a tack room, so I can bring the saddles, too.”

It wasn’t as organized as we would have liked. It took 2 days. Jimbo had to go back on the third day when they picked up the cattle followed by the hogs. He stopped by the stockyard and picked up his check and headed to the bank to cash it. They would only give five grand up front, but would order the cash if he wanted. He elected to take the balance in a cashier’s check and then headed to Des Moines to see the coin dealers.

He didn’t get back until late, bringing back Krugerrands, gold Eagles in all 4 denominations, silver Eagles and junk silver. He said the coin dealers were swamped and he had to hit every coin store in Des Moines. He wasn’t able to spend the last ten grand, leaving him with a total of \$20,000 in cash. He wanted to know if I felt up to a trip to Kansas City. I hadn’t been there since I’d shipped out for Iraq and told him sure. He ended up with a mixed bag of junk silver and took the balance in fractional gold Eagles.

His explanation of wanting company to KC was straight forward simple, KC made him nervous and always had. He went on to claim that he didn’t know why. I didn’t quite believe that, but didn’t press.

Jillian slept in a crib in our room, the toddlers in their own room, Jim in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom and Jimbo and Susan in the 4<sup>th</sup>. That only left us with one unoccupied bedroom. In a pinch, we could put up a few folks in the attic, using mattresses from the shelter. It was nice having children who now slept through the night, except for Jill. I had ammo and guns to pick up in Des Moines but was reluctant to run the risk Jimbo had. I called the gun store, got that balance owed and ask if, under circumstances, we could complete the transaction by mail

## Threatcon Delta – Chapter 10

The Gun Control Act of 1968 eliminated mail order guns sales. We were talking about 6 handguns, the Galco holsters and the ammo. Because I'd been to the store to order the guns in person, except for the Browning's, he agreed. He'd ship them UPS for overnight (in this case, ground) delivery. We were in zone 1 according the UPS zone schedule. I mailed the 4473s and a check, including enough, I thought to cover the shipping charges. The shipment came in three days later.

The shipping was less than I'd have had to pay for gas for the round trip, had we still been using gas. He called and asked if I wanted a refund on the excess shipping costs or a store credit. I told him to hang onto it and get me some cheap slings for the Standard model M1As. The ones he sent were surplus leather slings and he said we were even.

We had a most unusual setup for firearms. A P-14 as our primary handgun worn in a USGI leather flap holster backed up with a Browning Hi-Power in a Miami Classic shoulder holster backed up by a Walther PPK in an IWB holster in the pit of our backs. We could choose between our Super Match rifles or Mossberg shotguns with a third option of one Tac-50 or one of several Mini-14s. With the exception of the Tac-50, everything was duplicated in some manner.

Jimbo had more firearms than your average Missouri farmer including four sets of well used Single Action Army revolvers, Winchester rifles and coach guns. Beyond the arms they'd regularly used in the SAS sport, he had HK91s, Remington 870s with 20" barrels, rifle sights and magazine extension tubes from Choate plus the original barrels. His supply of ammo was smaller than ours by a vast margin, but ours resembled what you'd typically see in a small ammo dealer's warehouse or a military depot.

I tend to shop on impulse and anything good enough for Karen was good enough for me and vice versa. The Tac-50, however, cost as much as some new cars so we only had one. Not half bad when you consider we were both under 30. With Jimbo and Susan here, we could barely transit the basement due to the amount of food stored. Both sides of the tunnel from the basement to the shelter were loaded with ammo narrowing the tunnel to barely 4'.

We had anhydrous ethanol for the Jeep and Karen's car plus biodiesel for my pickup and our John Deere. To quote Charles Dickens's opening line in *A Tale of Two Cities*, *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...* We were battening the hatches before the storm struck, in our area. Winter was just around the corner and winter time was the slow time on a farm, do the chores and chase mama around the bed.

A week after the CDC identified the bug as Ames strain anthrax, the Administration announced during a press conference that they'd tracked down the planes used to deliver the spores but hadn't located the pilots, none of whom appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent. They were all men, possibly of European extraction. They'd rented the

planes using false credentials, but obviously knew how to fly including takeoff AND landing. From that general description, they could have been any group out of maybe 200 million Americans; or more because of the flying credentials which proved to be forgeries. The government had, in effect, hit a brick wall.

“Maybe we acted too soon.”

“Maybe and maybe not; those attacks could represent just the first in a series of events intended to bring us to our knees.”

“So what do you expect to happen next?”

“They didn’t damage our infrastructure with the first attack, so maybe that’s a clue. How about a radiological attack?”

“You mean nukes?”

“No, I mean dirty bombs.”

“Where?”

“How about Detroit, Jacksonville, Indianapolis, San Francisco, Columbus, Austin, Memphis, Fort Worth, Baltimore and Charlotte? They’re the next ten largest cities.”

“Were the first ten cities the largest?”

“Yes, they were. If there is any kind of pattern to this, I’d expect them to work their way down the list. There are lists on the internet listing the 101 largest cities and the next 101 largest cities. I view it as a strike list and it’s highly possible that any attacker might too.”

“What does this fiction author think about this?”

“He hasn’t posted a story in a couple of years, but his old stories referred to the year 2000 list of 100 largest cities. He seemed to think that attacking the cities according to their size gave the attacker the most bang for their buck.”

“What if it goes to a GTW?”

“Same list plus military targets. They’ll want to eliminate as much of our industrial base as possible. Karen’s the History teacher; ask her how quickly the US geared up for WW II.”

“Is that where you think this is headed, WW III?”

"I don't know, but we're prepared in any event. I didn't limit my reading only to TOM. There were a group of prolific authors and I read many of them. In a roundabout way, that's where I got the idea for a concrete barn connected to the shelter by a concrete culvert. I think that one was called *Percy's Mission*, except Percy built domes. You'd have to think that in a GTW, they'd go for all the federal and state seats of government. I doubt they'd go for the missile silos because of our launch on warning policy, although, they might hit Whiteman. It's more likely that they'd go for the bases, camps and posts with the largest populations. They'd hold a few missiles in reserve for cleanup."

"Don't go counting the chickens before they hatch. The attacks could have been an isolated event. Like those hijackings on 9/11."

"Maybe so, but I don't think so."

"And why not?"

"Too many people involved and it was all over the country, not limited to New York and Washington. They had to know which way the wind was from to be able to use the right flight path to do the most damage. I sure wouldn't want to be the person handling 200 pounds of anthrax spores."

"But there's a vaccine, right?"

"Sometimes the cure is as bad as the disease Jimbo. It's a painful series of shots and you need a booster every year. I looked it up and it said: The trade name is BioThrax, although it is commonly called Anthrax Vaccine Adsorbed (AVA). It is administered in a six-dose primary series at 0, 2, 4 weeks and 6, 12 and 18 months; annual booster injections are required thereafter to maintain immunity. The injections are typically very painful, and may leave the area of injection with swelling; this area may be painful for several days."

"Dirty bombs, what will they think of next?"

"Chemical warfare?"

"Is that efficient?"

"It could be in a large city, especially if they used a persistent agent."

"Give me an example."

"VX, a nerve gas."

"I thought that we'd disposed of our VX."

“Most, if not all of it has been incinerated or otherwise destroyed. However, any good chemist worth his salt could duplicate it.”

“If I’m following you, what you’re proposing is an escalating campaign against the US. Let’s say I buy it, where will it lead?”

“Our intelligence apparatus may eventually figure who is behind it, but I believe they’ll be three steps behind. They moved the threat level to orange and when we’re attacked again, it will probably go to red. Portions of the military have been on DEFCON 4 since we started to Global War on Terror. I know we’ve drawn Iraq down to a Division, and pulled out of Afghanistan, but I doubt they’ll be satisfied until all of our troops leave.”

“I don’t see the advantage of talking about it because it either happens or doesn’t. We’re here and with a moment’s notice will be secure in the shelter.”

Jimbo had a point; we couldn’t change what was going to happen by talking about it. Over the course of 10 years or so, I had changed, and in my humble opinion, for the better. I had the best looking wife in two states who was really smart and a History Teacher to boot. *Historia Vitae Magistra* was a Latin phrase that was her mantra, *History, the Teacher of Life*. As a whole, people kept doing the same things over and over again, somehow expecting different results.

Using her mad money, she had acquired a complete set of textbooks going all the way up to the senior level of high school. She also had all of the teachers’ guides. Although Karen had a Master’s degree in History, that’s not the same as having a Master’s degree in physics, biology or math. Oh, she had the books, but would need to find someone to teach the subjects if it ever came to that.

For my part, I had maintained a degree of skepticism, until the anthrax attacks. It was a contradiction, I know, we were preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. Once the attacks came I/we lost much of our skepticism and even merged Jimbo’s operation into ours, thinking that it would be for the short haul. Six months later, we were still merged and Jimbo and Susan were seriously considering moving back home. I had to agree and we spent several days moving their livestock and belongings back to Missouri. They got back just in time to prepare the fields for spring planting. He had a lot of market ready hogs and after he sold them, came to see us.

“The way I figure it, I owe you a share of this money. I brought the hogs, but we used your feed to fatten them. We’re going 50/50 on the proceeds, like it or not. When I sell the cattle, we’ll do the same thing only we’ll go 75/25 with me taking the lions share.”

“You don’t have to do that, we had plenty of feed.”

“Yes, I do and there will be no more discussion. Here you go, \$30,000 in cash, just the way you like it.”

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“Smith’s.”

“This is Will Sherman and I’d like to order a rifle.”

“What did you have in mind?”

“A McMillan Tac-50, just like the first one I bought a few years back.”

“They’ve gone up in price.”

“So has everything else. I still want 20 cases of the ammo, I haven’t shot up much.”

“Squirrel hunting?”

“Yeah right, how long will it take to get it in?”

“Maybe four days.”

“Call me when it arrives and my wife and I will drive up to pick it up. I’ll fill out one of the blank 4473s and bring it with us and we should be in and out.”

“Are you paying cash?”

“Yes, and you’re giving me my usual discount. Pull the previous invoice and duplicate the purchase except increase the ammo. Any chance you could get 2 Jet Suppressors?”

“\$3,000 each.”

“How soon?”

“Pick ‘em up with the rifles.”

“Who were you talking to?”

“I called Smith’s store and ordered you a new rifle. We’ll spend any leftover from the thirty grand on things you want or think we need.”

“Plan on taking the trailer, we need to shop at Costco. With mom, dad and Jim being here, we used up more than the usual amount of supplies. Oh, mom said we’d go together on a garden again this year. She is going to order one gross of cases of pints and two gross of cases of quarts.”

“Will that be enough?”



“I thought I’d order the same.”

“You’d better get another eight cases of lids.”

Everything we stored was dated and we used the first-in, first-out inventory system. We even gathered Morrell mushrooms and wild asparagus and enjoyed them, early in the spring. We ground our own corn meal using a Country Living Grain Mill, for which we had two sets of spare parts. It was the motorized version, naturally. We even had a Schnitzer manual steel flaker which was ideal for rolling oats, wheat, rye, spelt and all other dry grains, including soy beans.

We drove to Des Moines on Saturday after dropping the kids off at Jimbo and Susan’s. We started out picking up the new rifle and stowed it in the back of the pickup together with the 20 cases of A-MAX. That ammo weighed in the neighborhood of 500 pounds; thank God they loaded it for us. We also picked up a few odds and ends to replace ammo we had shot up practicing.

We went to Chuck’s for lunch and then headed to Costco in West Des Moines. The first item Karen loaded up on was toilet paper. We used two trolleys and went through separate lines, meeting up at the trailer and stacking our purchases. We bought 30 bundles, enough to replace what had been used and a little extra. It was pretty much the same for all of our other purchases, replacing what we’d used. With the outlandish supply of food we’d built up, we wouldn’t have had to go to Costco. We just felt better when we were back to full.

Next, we started hitting Maid Rites, buying tenderloins and frozen meat. We hit four places and ate at the last. Once home, we unloaded everything except the ammo and headed south to pick up the kids.

“Were they good?”

“They’re kids, they acted their age. Have a good trip?”

“We picked up one firearm and a load of ammo. We hit Costco and filled in the blank spots and stocked up on Maid Rite meat and tenderloins. We unloaded the stuff from Costco and Maid Rite, but I’m waiting for Jim to help me unload the ammo tomorrow.”

“You’re going to have to do that yourself. Jim is in the hospital and they’re taking out his appendix tomorrow. It’s not an emergency, but it was highly inflamed and that’s what the doctor recommended.”

“No problem; I only have one appliance cart anyway.”

“I’ll come up and give you a hand. You still have the trolley, right?”

“That would cut the job down to size, thank you.”

“His surgery isn’t scheduled until 11am so we can be there for the operation.”

“What for?”

“To sit in the waiting room and worry, like all parents are supposed to do.”

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Jim was off for three weeks while he healed up. When he returned to work, he was on light duty so I had him on the tractor most of the time. We planted the usual ratio of corn, beans and oats. The alfalfa was a permanent field because keeping a permanent alfalfa field increased the production. I decided to go with no till again this year.

The last of our troops were home from Iraq and for some reason, our permanent force in Korea was being gradually reduced to zero. The only overseas troops we’d have would be liaisons with most countries, a hospital in Germany and the naval presence in Yokosuka. The President had proposed cutting the standing Army, Navy and Air Force but Congress was leery.

The Joint Strike Fighter was now operational and replacing the worn out F/A-18s with the Navy, the AV-8B Harriers, with the Marine Corps and the F-16s with the Air Force. It would be quite some time before they were all manufactured and delivered. The Air Force had succeeded in increasing the number of F-22 Raptors, but not to the 381 they wanted. They had made it to about 250 before the funding dried up completely. Congress is reluctant to build \$450 million fighters, even when we’re at war, which we weren’t at the moment.

We had some success selling off low-hour airframes, especially the F-16s that most countries seemed to like. The Eagles had all been retired and they were working on an E model Apache. Boeing had sold a batch of C-17s overseas and it kept them going long enough for Congress to resume purchases. After nearly 50 years of use, the services retired the M16/M4, electing to go with the HK416/417 platforms. I don’t know why they did that, it made sense.

I got a phone call the other day from the Sergeant, now Sergeant First Class, who had supplied us with the Mk211MP. He pointed out that he had far better access now and was going to be retiring soon. He wanted to know if there was anything I wanted before he was gone. I told him I could always use another 20 ammo cans of you know what, and some of the replacements for the M-61s. It was just a shame, I mentioned, that the Army didn’t use the LAW rocket anymore.

“They’re fifteen to the case and I can’t demonstrate a need for more than 10 cases.”

“Ten cases will be fine.”

"I can go 250 on the replacement bangers, but that my limit. I can do the twenty cans, but this is going to cost you."

"How much?"

"Round numbers, \$26,000, cash."

"How long to get the stuff in?"

"Three weeks. I'll deliver like before."

"I need 4 AN/PVS-27s." (Gen 3+ night vision)

"\$5,000 each."

"Ouch."

You can buy them retail, \$10,700 each plus tax."

"Ok, I'll take 4."

It never occurred to me that this could be a sting because I still had 19 and a fraction cans of the original purchase. I could also blame him for the M-61s, Mk3A2s and the smoke grenades. I'll say this much, his timing was perfect. It kind of made me wonder if he knew about my new rifle. Nah...

Using cash only, we had amassed a significant amount of cash in the small safe. We'd converted it to gold and silver when the prices dipped, which wasn't often. The more things changed, the more they stayed the same. Our only bills were property tax, insurance, electricity and vehicle registration. There was the occasional repair, but those were done by the guy who converted the Jeep and Karen's car, the Ford dealer or the John Deere dealer. He was trying to sell me a new tractor and I told him the old tractor had been good enough for my dad and was good enough for me. We weren't farming any more land than dad had farmed. I also had a small John Deere utility tractor to pull wagons, etc.

Three weeks later, I got a delivery, checked it over and handed over forty-six grand in cash. I loaded it on the trolley and eventually got all of it in the tunnel between the basement and shelter. I was going to need to quit buying things or start storing them in the storage building. Later the same day, Jill and her husband David pulled in unannounced with their three kids. Karen took a box of pork tenderloins out of the freezer and moved two bags of fries from the freezer to the freezer on the refrigerator. We had several packages of frozen buns in a freezer.

"The place looks the same."

“It may look the same, but it isn’t as you remember it being. For one thing, I added that storm shelter. But, to be truthful, it’s more than a simple storm shelter. We’ve amassed a significant amount of food and other preparations. I’ve even acquired a bit of an arsenal.”

“Like that rifle you bought for me?”

“I still have it and Karen uses it. I’ve added others, mostly run of the mill weapons, but I do have a fifty caliber rifle.”

“You still as crazy as you were before?”

“Probably worse. There was that anthrax attack last year and they never figured out who did it. The final death toll was in the millions. It’s not if, only when and what. It could be a tornado hitting the farm, a rock from the asteroid belt, a nuclear war or any of about a couple of dozen other scenarios.”

“I suppose that includes earthquakes?”

“We’re not that far from the New Madrid Fault zone. Give or take about 350 miles.”

“An earthquake wouldn’t come this far.”

“Are you willing to bet your life on it?”

Jill was probably right, at best, we might feel a quake on the New Madrid Fault. There were many more things that could happen and they could be far worse, especially a tornado rated EF-5. Even a simple lightning strike could take out the radio antennas, but there were spares. Everything on the farm, in large, was double or triple redundant. The only gasoline powered vehicle I hadn’t converted from gasoline to ethanol was the utility tractor. We didn’t burn much gasoline over the course of a year and the farm tank held 500-gallons of stabilized gas.

We got caught up and I gave them the tour of the shelter, omitting mention of the armory. I got enough strange looks when they walked down the tunnel and saw the thousands of rounds of ammo and other ordnance.

“You’re really into this survivalism, aren’t you? Planning on overthrowing the government?”

“No David, I’m not. If something really, really bad happened and civilization as we know it ended, I want the ability to take care of my family. You won’t find any machine guns, artillery or automatic weapons. Since I served in the Army, I do know how to use them, but don’t see any point in breaking the law to have them.”

“Is everything you have 100% legal?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes.”

I lied, but I told the truth. It was legal for the military and LEOs to have them, just not us. The suppressors we had would have been legal, with qualifications, in most states. Jill hadn't been such a liberal until she met and began dating David. I planned to let a sleeping dog lie. I viewed him as the guilty party for changing her attitude. I'm surprised he let her take the 10/22. I'll bet that they didn't have more than a box of ammo for the firearm. They probably had it bound with cables locks, the ammo stored a mile from the gun and rarely took it out except to oil it.

“What do you mean by in a manner of speaking?”

“I guess I should have just said yes. Everything we have is 100% legal.”

“I've got both deep fat fryers going, is everyone ready for supper?”

“What's on the menu Karen?”

“Breaded pork tenderloins and fries.”

“Commercial?”

“We buy them from Maid Rite Jill.”

“What did you say the new baby's name was?”

“Jillian.”

“A namesake, how sweet.”

It was getting to the point that I was having trouble stomaching what Jill had become. She no doubt voted for Obama, and thought he was doing a great job in his present endeavor. She'd probably vote for him again. It was a shame that we didn't live in the same state so I could cancel her vote.

On other issues, Karen had lost her conceal carry endorsement when her driver's license had expired. By then, however, she had the Iowa carry permit. It wasn't a problem because, “It is unlawful to carry a firearm concealed on or about one's person without a concealed carry endorsement on the Missouri driver's or non-driver's license or a valid permit to carry concealed firearms issued by ANY state.” More recently, she'd gotten a Galco Pandora Holster Handbag (\$340+tax) and carried the Browning loaded with Gold Dot. The .380 was in an ankle holster with one spare magazine in her purse. She said it was like walking around with two library books in the handbag.

I favored my P-14 and the Walther. We had to carry concealed because it seemed that the sight of a handgun got tongues wagging. It might not have in a Post Apocryphal World (PAW), but we hadn't gotten to that point, yet. I studied all the history I could get off Wikipedia trying to understand where we'd been and where we might be headed. When I had a question, more often than not, Karen either knew the answer or could point me in the right direction.

I also made it a habit to read several news outlets every day via their online sites. A person had to ignore the MSM's conclusions and do a Jack Webb, "Just the facts, ma'am" sort of analysis. Reading through the lines, I became concerned. Not only had Iran not ceased its nuclear activities, but they were suspected of having produced nuclear warheads for their IRBMs. Israel, mired in controversy after a second Lebanon war, was unable to find enough agreement between Labor, Likud and Kadima and the minor parties to come up with a plan of action.